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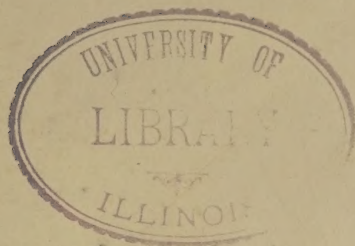
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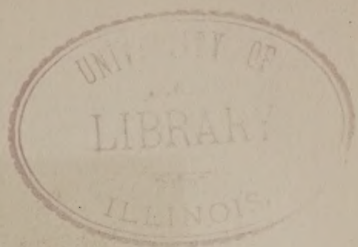
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THE
HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

FROM THE INVASION OF JULIUS CÆSAR TO THE END OF THE
REIGN OF GEORGE II.

BY HUME AND SMOLLETT.

WITH

THE CONTINUATION,
FROM THE ACCESSION OF GEORGE III.
TO THE
ACCESSION OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

BY THE REV. T. S. HUGHES, B.D.

LATE CANON OF PETERBOROUGH.

ALSO

COPIOUS NOTES, THE AUTHOR'S LAST CORRECTIONS,
IMPROVEMENTS, AND ENLARGEMENT.

With Historical Illustrations, Autographs, and Portraits.

A NEW EDITION.

VOL. XVII.

LONDON: GEORGE BELL, 186 FLEET STREET.
1855.

"Histories," says Lord Bacon, "make wise men:" and in proportion as their minds are influenced by a natural love of their country, so must they feel a desire to become familiar with the most authentic account of its origin, its progress towards civilization, and the circumstances leading to its present importance in the scale of nations.

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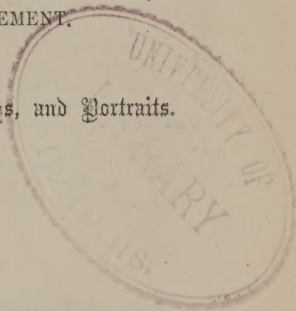
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Engraved by A. W. Warren.

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CHAPTER LVIII.

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WHEN parliament met, in February, Mr. Brougham moved for a copy of the treaty concluded at Paris, and designated by the title of 'the Holy Alliance.' After citing an expression of Voltaire, 'that a colloquy of kings boded no good to nations,' he observed, that there was something so singular in the wording of this document, as to warrant a considerable degree of jealousy on the part of the house: nor could he

think it had a sole reference to spiritual objects ; for the partition of Poland had been prefaced by language of a similar nature ; and the proclamation of the empress Catharine, which wound up that fatal tragedy, was couched in almost the same words. Lord Castlereagh, having vindicated the good faith and piety of the confederated sovereigns, refused to produce the treaty ; for, although it had been communicated to our regent in the first instance by the Russian emperor, and received his royal highness's approbation, it had not received his signature ; and the usage of parliament was against the production of any treaty to which this country was not a party. Whatever may be thought of such a confederacy ; whether, as some suppose, it originated in sincere enthusiasm, or in the sole desire of suppressing that popular principle which had been called into action by the united sovereigns themselves during their late contests with Napoleon, due credit must be given to the prince for strict adherence to 'those forms of the British constitution,' which, according to his own statement, prevented him from acceding to this alliance : a contrary line of conduct would certainly have embarrassed his government at a subsequent period, when measures were adopted by these theocratic despots, which were adverse to its principles.

From an abstract of the net produce of revenue ending the fifth of January, the amount appeared to be £66,443,802 ; showing an excess of £1,013,821 over that of the preceding year : nevertheless, the chancellor of the exchequer announced his intention of proposing a five per cent. income-tax ; and with a view of gaining over the multitude, he declared himself ready to exempt all incomes under £150, and farms paying less than that sum in rent, from its operation : on this reduced scale he calculated that the tax would produce £6,000,000 ; but its continuance was not only deprecated by petitions from the great towns of the empire, but by vehement harangues in the house of commons, where it was shown that, according to the original plan, more than half the impost had been paid by incomes below the proposed point of exemption ; so that, according to his proposed scale, a sum exceeding £3,000,000 could scarcely be expected : Mr. Vansittart, however, persisted in his design ; but, on a division, was defeated by a majority of 238 against 201. As the more opulent classes chose this method of relieving themselves from a heavy pressure, and rendered a loan indispensable, the minister resolved on granting a boon to the lower orders which might at the same time alleviate that distress under which agriculture was

now laboring ; accordingly he declined to bring forward again the war-tax on malt, which had been estimated to produce £2,000,000 per annum. The supplies for the year were stated at £39,400,000, and the ways and means to meet them as deficient about £2,500,000 : but so complicated and obscure were the accounts, that Mr. J. P. Grant moved counter-resolutions, proving, on his view of things, a deficiency of seventeen millions : a majority of the house, however, supported the minister ; and the sum required to meet the supplies was procured from the directors of the Bank, who advanced £3,000,000, at three per cent. interest, on condition of being permitted to increase their capital by one-fourth. The amount of army estimates provoked a long and vehement discussion : opposition insisted that the maintenance of so large a standing force as it was proposed to keep up was uncalled for by the aspect of foreign affairs, while it was incompatible with the distressed state of the nation : ministers, on the other hand, alleged, that not only the situation of continental states, but the large increase of our colonial dependencies, demanded a proportional augmentation of our peace establishment ; and the estimated number of 176,615 men, including 30,000 stationed in France, was finally voted. After a violent debate on similar grounds, a vote of 33,000 men for the navy was also agreed to ; but a decided expression of public opinion, out of parliament, induced government to make various reductions in both these services during the year.

The proposal of so large a force at this time as 25,000 men for Ireland naturally excited surprise, and led to some animadversion on the necessity of its employment. After all the evils and abuses which had been extinguished, and the many improvements introduced into that kingdom by the union, it still exhibited a wretched scene of misery, turbulence, and crime : much has been done, and much attempted, since the times of which we are now treating, to remedy the disorders of Ireland ; but still, though gifted with every physical blessing, that country is a prey to every moral curse ; and Irish misery still costs England countless sums to coerce her struggles under that load of oppression which was heaped on her by our ancestors. If any sin of the fathers is certain to be visited on the children, it is that of misrule ; and the hardest part of this dispensation is, that punishment commonly falls, not on those who uphold, but who relax an oppressive system. The grand evils which continue to afflict Ireland, arise, in the first instance, from that monstrous plan of confiscation pursued by

our ancestors, which transferred so large a portion of the soil to foreigners: these cannot be expected to reside on their estates, which are therefore consigned to the hands of middlemen, who grind the people without pity or remorse;—in the second instance, to that unfortunate method which was pursued for the introduction of our reformed religion. Instead of missionaries, well skilled in their native tongue, being sent to convince the inhabitants of the errors of their ancient faith, and reconcile them to the new church, their rich endowments were suddenly transferred to the protestant establishment, many of whose teachers were appointed from the sole motive of interest; most of them being bigoted Calvinists, whose system was least of all attractive to the followers of Romanism, and none acquainted with the language which alone their parishioners could speak or understand with readiness; nor was it even thought necessary to furnish them with a translation either of the liturgy or the Scriptures; ‘though,’ says bishop Heber, ‘they were compelled by a fine, rarely indeed enforced, to attendance on a church service which was still more unintelligible to them than their ancient mass-book, without having the same associations to recommend it. Accordingly, while Wales, from an opposite line of treatment, received the doctrines of the reformation with avidity, and at an early period was become almost exclusively protestant; while the Norman isles have ever since been among the most faithful adherents of the episcopal church, from the advantage of French preachers and a French service-book; Ireland, with a people above most others docile and susceptible of new impressions, has remained, through a great majority of her population, in the possession of a creed discountenanced by the state, and under the dominion of prejudices which, even to the present moment, no effectual measures have been taken to remove.’¹ Mr. Peel, who had lately commenced his political career with the credit of superior talents and a well-exercised intellect, was at this time secretary for Ireland; and he on the present occasion proved, with convincing energy and mournful truth, the necessity of so large a force as was proposed for that country: unfortunately, however, for Ireland and himself, this statesman, whose legislative infancy had been cradled in tory prejudices, allied himself to the dominant party; and his strong anti-catholic policy neutralised or counteracted the better spirit of his Irish administration. The

¹ Life of Jeremy Taylor, vol. i. p. 190.

disturbances which distracted that country were ascribed by Mr. Peel to a systematic violation of all laws: this, indeed, was the case; and while a systematic spirit of injustice pervaded those laws, nothing could put down the opposition, except a revision of the laws themselves, or the introduction of a military force: as the former remedy was at this time rejected, the latter became necessary for the protection of life and property. The general routine of motions for inquiry into the state of Ireland, and for the repeal of catholic disabilities, were followed by their usual results; but a measure of some practical importance—the consolidation of the British and Irish exchequers—was effected in the course of this session: a bill also passed for the issue of a new silver coinage; and two others were introduced by lord Castlereagh, to authorise and regulate the detention of Napoleon Bonaparte in the island of St. Helena: Mr. Western took the lead in drawing public attention to the growing distress of agriculturists, and to means for their future protection; but nothing satisfactory could be obtained: the manufacturing and commercial party in the house were strong; and, being firmly convinced that they had an opposite interest to maintain, as if all their profits and prosperity depended on cheap corn, they were anxious that the supply of food for the people should pass through their own ships and warehouses: indeed whenever our corn-laws shall be abrogated, the greatest danger will arise from a different and worse species of monopolists than agriculturists; viz., free-trade merchants: the corn-growers are obliged from want of capital to bring their produce to market—the corn-merchants from their abundance may starve us into their own terms. Ministers seemed to be in a state of doubt and vacillation on the subject; but it was soon felt that no interests could prosper at the expense of agriculture, with which so many complicated interests are bound up; it was also felt that the British farmer, pressed by so many public burthens, and obliged to cultivate his land at a heavy expense, could not compete with the foreigner, who paid little for labor, and less in taxes.

A message from the regent to both houses, on the fourteenth of March, announced the marriage-contract of his daughter, the princess Charlotte Augusta, with his serene highness prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg; and on the motion of the chancellor of the exchequer, an annual sum of £60,000 was voted to that illustrious pair during their joint lives; the whole to be continued to her royal highness if the prince

should die first, and £50,000 to him if he should be the survivor: £60,000 also were granted by way of outfit. This munificence was not the act of a venal parliament; which, it must be confessed, was ready enough to vote away the nation's money in order to gratify the whims and luxuries of royalty; but it may be considered as the spontaneous expression of love and affection from a great and generous people. On the second of May, the auspicious nuptials were celebrated, which diffused throughout the country unqualified pleasure and satisfaction; for the public felt a lively interest, not only in the personal character of the princess, and her relation to the state; but in the circumstances of her union with the object of her own choice; a union in which political calculations and diplomatic contracts for once had no place: nor was this honest and honorable attachment of the nation to the royal couple diminished by their deportment subsequent to their marriage; for, with an unaffected gracefulness and benignity, they shared in the amusements, the occupations, and the devotions of the people; while the example of domestic purity which they promised to uphold was hailed by every friend to the moral interests of society with joy and admiration.

Two months after the marriage of the princess Charlotte, the long attachment of the duke of Gloucester to his cousin, the princess Mary, terminated also in a matrimonial union, with the approbation of her brother: as this royal duke had never launched into extravagant expenditure, he required no pecuniary grant on the occasion, either for himself or for his bride. Although the present period might be considered as one of the happiest in the regent's life (for the princess of Wales was at a distance, the political safety of the country had been wondrously achieved, he was virtually the reigning sovereign, and his love of splendor was profusely gratified by the ministry); yet even now he began to adopt those habits of seclusion, which, in his latter years, withdrew him from the eyes of the people, and estranged their affections from his person: his visits were paid to few except the marquesses of Conyngham and Hertford: his courts and public parties were very infrequent: and his principal occupation lay in superintending the fashions of dress, or improvements and alterations at his different places of residence.

The agreeable prospects, however, which arose out of these royal marriages could not avert public attention from more immediate causes of anxiety and alarm, arising from the increasing pressure of national distress. As the year advanced,

the calamities of a most inclement season and a deficient harvest were added to a general stagnation of trade and commerce, in the absence of that monopoly of the foreign market which war secured to this country : a sudden rise in the price of all necessities of life, combining with a reduction of wages and a want of employment, produced great distress among the poor, which vented itself in discontent and murmurs, and finally in acts of outrageous violence : meanwhile, this increase of public difficulties brought into action a host of demagogues, who availed themselves of the people's sufferings to disseminate among them inflammatory and seditious doctrines : the reckless prodigality of government habituated to a war expenditure, and evidently averse to retrenchment ; the corruption and waste arising from sinecures, pensions, and other causes of an improvident administration of public money ;—these were made fertile themes of declamation by evil agitators ; the populace were plausibly taught to ascribe all their miseries to the dishonesty of their rulers ; and a radical reform in the whole system of our constitution was inculcated as the universal remedy for distress. It was remarked with alarm, as a new and ominous feature of the times, that political meetings for petitions against abuses, and other ostensible purposes of reform, were eagerly attended by an immense concourse of the lowest and most ignorant classes, who were harangued by orators of their own, and violently excited, not only against the government, but the higher orders of the community : the constitutional opponents of the ministry, however, though disgusted by that resistance which was shown to measures of retrenchment and economy, abstained from all participation in scenes which threatened the most appalling consequences.

These avowedly political meetings were generally conducted without any decided breaches of the peace ; and the first disposition to open tumult arose more immediately from the pressure of absolute want on the agricultural and manufacturing laborers : in some of the eastern counties particularly, acts of serious violence were committed both by the artisans in towns, and by the rural peasantry, who had been thrown out of employment, and who thought themselves equally entitled to blame the master manufacturers for want of work, and the farmers for scarcity and high prices of food : nightly meetings were held ; threatening letters sent ; houses, barns, and stacks fired ; and in the isle of Ely, something like an organised insurrection broke forth, which was not suppressed without the exercise of force, and the execution of some principal offenders.

In Staffordshire, where the stoppage of several great iron-works had not only deprived the men employed in them of bread, but had extended the suspension of trade to immense collieries connected with that branch of business, the whole laboring population were reduced to a state of starvation: but though the colliers exhibited threatening symptoms of riot, they were appeased, without bloodshed, by the temperate interference of the magistracy; while the wants of the sufferers were extensively supplied by the contributions of private benevolence: the patience indeed of the wretched workmen in the iron trade, under the severest privations, was in general most laudable; though one casual riot arose among those at the large establishment near Merthyr-Tydvil, in South Wales, which was not suppressed without military force: the conduct of the clothing manufacturers was less exemplary; and at Nottingham, in particular, the system of outrage in frame-breaking, which had marked former periods of distress, was now alarmingly renewed under circumstances of regular combination.

The metropolis had continued, on the whole, tranquil until near the close of this year; when two meetings in Spa-fields, convened by some mob-orators to petition the regent for reform of abuses, attracted a vast concourse of the rabble, and led, on the second occasion, to a riot attended with more apparent danger than any which had occurred for many years. Henry Hunt, the principal demagogue, though his language in announcing to the mob the rejection of their petition was sufficiently seditious and inflammatory, had the prudence to withdraw, and thus avoid committing himself to the consequences of his harangue; but a band of his more desperate associates, who had attended him with a tricolored flag, and other symbols borrowed from the old revolutionary school, endeavoured, under the conduct of a father and son, named Watson, to lead the rabble into the city: the numbers who followed them were, however, inconsiderable; but on their march, they broke open the shop of a gunsmith, on Snow-hill, to obtain arms; and the younger Watson there shot a gentleman who offered some remonstrance. Seizing all the arms they could find in that and some other such dépôts, they proceeded in a kind of military array, until they reached the Royal Exchange; when the lord mayor and aldermen, after vainly exhorting them to disperse, boldly secured several of the more audacious who had forced themselves into the building, and caused the gates to be closed against all others. The mob now fired, though without effect,

over the gates, on the magistrates; but a strong body of troops having been quickly sent into the city, the rioters were finally overpowered, and compelled to disperse: an example or two was made of the ringleaders; but the greatest criminal, the younger Watson, eluded all search, and effected his escape to America: the vigilance of government however was now excited; and after experience of the danger, every popular meeting in the vicinity of the metropolis was properly watched, without needless interference, by large military bodies and special constables.

From the excitement produced by these domestic occurrences, national attention was for a time diverted to an exploit of our navy, even more glorious, on account of the cause in which it was undertaken, than for the daring valor and brilliant success by which it was distinguished. To the great disgrace of Europe in general, but with greatest reproach, perhaps, to the first of maritime powers, the piratical states of Barbary had for ages been permitted to infest the commerce of the Mediterranean, and carry off Christians to the most dreadful slavery; while no law gave them any protection from the caprice and cruelty of masters, who hated and detested them for the very faith which they professed:² the fears indeed of these barbarians had induced them, during the late war, to respect the British flag; but a renewal of free commerce after the peace tempted the three principal states of Tunis, Tripoli, and Algiers to augment the number of their corsairs; and the ferocious system of depredation, which was thus revived against the vessels of nations allied with or protected by Great Britain, rendered it imperative on the mistress of the ocean to vindicate her honor: for this purpose, lord Exmouth, who then commanded in the Mediterranean, was instructed to demand security from these piratical states for the commerce of our Ionian islands; to negotiate a peace for Naples and Sardinia; and, if possible, to obtain a general abolition of christian slavery.³

² It was stated in the British house of commons, that 'in one case, fifty out of 300 prisoners died of ill-treatment at Algiers, on the first day of their arrival; the rest were kept in the most miserable condition, being allowed only a pound of bread a-day, and subject to the lash from morning to night. No age, no sex was spared. A Neapolitan lady of distinction, carried off with eight children, six of whom survived, was seen by a British officer in the thirteenth year of her captivity.'

³ 'Perhaps there is no instance on record of such detestable bigotry, as that shown on this occasion by the head of the Roman church, who is said to have declined the offer of lord Exmouth's

His lordship proceeded first to Algiers, where he obtained partially the object of his mission, in the release of all Ionian captives, and the ratification of a pacific treaty for Naples and Sardinia; the former nation paying a ransom of 500 dollars, and the latter 300 dollars a-head, for their redeemed slaves; but at Tunis and Tripoli, the demand was made and accepted, for a total abolition of christian slavery. In the mean time, he had received instructions to claim from Algiers the privilege of selling and refitting privateers in this port; a privilege, which had lately been granted by treaty to America: returning therefore on this mission, he took the opportunity of pressing on that state also the abolition of slavery; but here he had a more formidable power to deal with: his request was haughtily refused; and when his lordship, together with his brother, sir Israel Pellew, and Mr. M'Donell, the British consul, were returning to the fleet, they were insulted by the populace, and narrowly escaped assassination. As the admiral had made this demand with very slight instructions from our admiralty, he did not think himself justified in proceeding to extremities; especially as it was a common remark, that the obstructions to navigation created by Barbary corsairs were advantageous to British commerce: he therefore agreed that the dey should appoint an envoy who might proceed first to Constantinople, for the sanction of the Ottoman Porte, and thence to London to treat on lord Exmouth's proposal: his lordship then returned with his fleet to England; nor did he reach its shores, before accounts arrived which determined our government to wait no longer the issue of negotiations, but at once to exact satisfaction for the past, and security for the future: on the twenty-third of May, the Algerines had displayed their revenge, and contempt for our interference, by imprisoning the British vice-consul, and barbarously murdering the crews of several Italian vessels, under our flag, that were engaged in the coral fishery at Bona.

Having received intelligence of these outrages, ministers nobly resolved to enforce obedience on the common enemies of civilised society, who were now considered as having filled up the measure of their iniquity and crimes: lord Exmouth, therefore, received instructions to complete his work; and whatever force he might think necessary was placed at his disposal.

services, from difficulties arising out of religious scruples at confiding a formal trust to a protestant.'—*Life of Lord Exmouth*, p. 293.

The city of Algiers is built on the declivity of a hill, in a triangular shape, with a base fronting the sea, rising directly from the water, about a mile in length: the place is strongly fortified with walls of immense thickness, mounted with heavy guns; the sea-defences being particularly formidable: the harbor is artificial, formed by a pier and mole; and all parts around it were at this time covered with strong fortifications, mounting no less than 220 guns; some in double, and others in triple tiers; while the batteries on the wall, and at each extremity of the town, were so numerous, as to bring near 500 pieces of artillery to bear on its maritime approaches: many guns also in fortifications on the higher part of the city were in situations which enabled them to fire with great effect on assailants. Our lords of the admiralty were not a little surprised, when it was proposed to attack these works with five sail of the line, five frigates, four bomb-ketches, and five gun-brigs; though several naval officers, who were consulted by the board, considered them unassailable; and Nelson himself, in a conversation with captain Brisbane, had named twenty-five ships of the line as a force requisite to attack them.⁴ Lord Exmouth, therefore, was again offered any number of ships which he might think necessary; but having long and well considered the matter, and feeling satisfied that five ships could destroy the fortifications on the mole as effectually as a greater number, and with more safety to the assailants, he fully explained his plans to the admiralty, marked the position which each ship was to occupy, and was allowed to act on his own judgment: accordingly he set sail, on the twenty-fifth of July, from Portsmouth, on board the *Queen Charlotte*, of 108 guns; with the *Impregnable*, of 104, bearing the flag of rear-admiral Milne; the *Superb*, *Minden*, and *Albion*, of seventy-four; the *Leander*, fifty; the *Severn* and *Glasgow*, forty; the *Hebrus* and *Granicus*, thirty-six; the *Mutine* and *Prometheus*, sixteen; the *Cordelia* and *Britomart*, of ten; and the *Infernal*, *Hecla*, *Fury*, and *Beelzebub*, bomb-vessels: when he arrived on the ninth of August, at Gibraltar, he found there a Dutch squadron of five frigates and a corvette, commanded by vice-admiral Von Capellan; who, on learning the noble object of this expedition, solicited and obtained leave to join it.

On the thirteenth, each ship received a plan of the fortifications, with full instructions regarding the position she was to

⁴ Life of Lord Exmouth, p. 309.

occupy : on the fourteenth, they set sail ; and on the sixteenth within about 200 miles of their destination, they were joined by the sloop *Prometheus*, direct from Algiers, bringing information that the Moors had not only completed all their defences, but added new ones ; that 40,000 troops had been assembled, and janissaries called in from the most distant garrisons ; while the whole naval force, consisting of four frigates, five large corvettes, and thirty-seven gun-boats, were collected in the harbor. In this vessel were the wife, daughter, and infant child of Mr. M'Donell, our consul : the two former had succeeded in getting off, disguised as midshipmen ; but the infant, which had been concealed in a basket, cried as it passed the gateway, and thus led to an arrest of all the party then on shore : the child was sent off next morning by the dey ; 'a solitary instance,' said lord Exmouth, 'of his humanity ;' but the consul was confined in irons at his house ; and the surgeon, three midshipmen, and fourteen seamen of the *Prometheus*, were detained as prisoners.⁵

On the twenty-seventh, at daybreak, the combined fleets came in sight of Algiers ; and as the ships lay nearly becalmed, a flag of truce was sent with the terms dictated by our government, and a demand for the immediate liberation of the consul and seamen : the boat carrying the flag was met outside the mole by the captain of the port ; who received the admiral's communication, and promised an answer in two hours : in the mean time, a breeze had sprung up, and the fleet, standing into the bay, lay to about a mile distant from the town ; at two o'clock, the boat was seen returning, with a signal that no answer had been sent ; on which, orders were given, and every ship bore up to its appointed station.

The Queen Charlotte led the attack, and at half-past two, anchored near the mole-head ; her starboard broadside flanking the batteries from thence to the lighthouse : the mole was crowded with troops and other persons, many of whom had climbed on the parapet to look at the ships ; which being observed by lord Exmouth, who stood on the poop, he beckoned to them several times with his hand for the purpose of inducing them to retire, but without any effect : as soon as the ship was fairly placed, the crew gave three hearty cheers ; and scarcely had the sound of the last died away, when a gun was fired from an upper tier of the eastern battery, followed by a second and a third in quick succession ; but the report of

⁵ Life of Lord Exmouth, p. 318.

this last was drowned in the thunder of the *Queen Charlotte's* broadside, which is stated to have swept off more than 500 men from the crowded mole: the admiral was immediately followed by the *Leander*, which placed herself on his larboard bow, at the entrance of the harbor; while the rest of the British fleet passed on, and took their appointed stations; the Dutch, as it had been concerted, anchoring before the works to the southward of the town: eastward of the lighthouse, at a distance of 2000 yards, were placed the bomb-vessels, whence shells were thrown with admirable precision by our marine artillery; while the flotilla of gun, rocket, and mortar boats, directed by captain Mitchell, were distributed near the openings between the line-of-battle ships, and at the entrance to the mole: this disposition of our vessels, commanding the strongest defences, while they were exposed to the weakest part of their fire, gave great confidence both to officers and men: all behaved admirably; and it was not long before the state of the enemy's batteries exhibited proofs of the skill and courage of their assailants.

Before the fight had become general, our flag-ship had demolished the fortifications on the mole: then, drawing her broadside more to the northward, she soon brought down the tower of the lighthouse: and gun after gun fell from the demolished batteries: the last of these was dismounted just as the artillerymen were in the act of discharging it; and an Algerine chief was seen to spring on the ruins of the parapet, shaking his scimitar with impotent rage, against the ship.⁶ Not long after the attack had fairly commenced, the enemy's flotilla of gun-boats advanced with daring courage, under cover of the smoke, to board our vessels; but as soon as they were seen, a few guns, chiefly from the *Leander*, sent thirty-three to the bottom: some time before this, lord Exmouth despatched a message to his brave coadjutor, Von Capellan, to express great satisfaction at the direction and effect of his fire on the southern batteries: which, by taking their attention from the *Queen Charlotte*, enabled that ship to command the mole, and all the enclosed vessels: at four o'clock, when a general and heavy cannonade of more than an hour had produced no signs of submission, his lordship determined to destroy the enemy's ships: accordingly, the nearest frigate was boarded, and fired so effectually with laboratory torches, and a carcass-shell placed on the main-deck, that she

⁶ Life of Lord Exmouth, p. 324.

was enveloped in flames almost before the barge's crew were over her side : as, however, she burned from her moorings, without communicating the conflagration to other ships, our gun-boats, with the *Queen Charlotte's* launch, threw carcass-shells on the largest frigate, moored in the centre of the flotilla ; when, notwithstanding all the enemy's exertions, she was set on fire ; and soon communicated the flames, not only to surrounding vessels, but to the store-houses and arsenal : at seven, she came drifting from the harbor, and passed close to the flag-ship, nearly involving her in the same destruction.

About sunset, a message was received from our rear-admiral, requesting the presence of a frigate, to divert from the *Impregnable* some portion of the terrible fire to which that vessel was exposed, and which had already killed or wounded 150 of her crew ; the *Glasgow* immediately weighed ; but the wind had been lulled by the cannonade, and she could not advance to render the assistance required : then the *Impregnable* received permission to haul off ; but a British crew, animated by such leaders as admiral Milne and captain Brace, would not allow their ship so to go out of action : and she nobly kept her station to the last. Toward night, our fleet slackened its fire, as the enemy's guns became silenced ; the ships also began to feel a necessity of husbanding their ammunition ; for they had already expended almost 218 tons of powder, and 50,000 shots, weighing more than 500 tons of iron ; with 960 shells and rockets :⁷ under such a concentrated and well-directed fire, the sea-defences of Algiers, and great part of the town, lay—a shattered heap of ruins.

At a little before ten, the objects of the attack having been effected, the *Queen Charlotte's* bower cable was cut, and her head hauled round to seaward : but she still continued to fire her guns abaft the mainmast ; warps were run out to gain an offing ; but many were cut by shot from batteries to the southward, and from others on heights which the ship's guns could not reach : a very light air was felt about half-past ten, and sail was made : but the vessel was not manageable, except by aid of boats ; and the only point gained, was that of keeping her head from the land : at eleven, however, she began to draw out from the batteries ; and in about half an hour more she ceased to fire. The breeze now freshened ; a tremendous thunder-storm came on, with torrents of rain ; and heaven's own artillery seemed as if it was directed against the dwellings

⁷ *Life of Lord Exmouth*, p. 328.

of iniquity : in about three hours, the tempest ceased ; and lord Exmouth collected in his cabin all the wounded that could be safely moved, to join with him and his officers in thanksgiving to the Almighty for their victory and preservation : in no former action had the casualties been so great in proportion to the force employed ; though no single ship in the present conflict suffered very severely, except the Impregnable : the British had 128 killed, and 690 wounded ; our Dutch allies had thirteen in the first list, and fifty-two in the second ; while the loss of the enemy was estimated at not much less than 7000.

On the twenty-eighth, at daybreak, lieutenant Burgess was sent on shore with a flag of truce, carrying the same demands as were made on the preceding morning : in the mean time, the bomb-vessels took up their former position ; and it was the opinion of all the consuls, that if our fire had been re-opened, in two more hours it would have involved the whole city in ruins : for the walls were already cracked, and the aqueducts being broken up, the people were perishing for want of water : soon, however, the captain of the port, accompanied by the Swedish consul, came off, and informed lord Exmouth that all his terms would be agreed to ; even that most humiliating demand of a public apology from the dey to the British consul, in the presence of his own ministers and officers. Above 1200 slaves were embarked on the thirty-first ; making, with those before liberated through the address of lord Exmouth, more than 3000 rescued from a life of torture. Having sent them to their respective countries, and left a ship to receive some individuals who had not yet come up from the interior, he sailed on the third of September for England, where his services were acknowledged in a manner worthy of his exalted merit : he was advanced to the dignity of a viscount, and received an honorable augmentation of his arms ; the kings of Holland, Spain, and Sardinia conferred on him their highest orders of knighthood ; the city of London voted him its freedom, and a sword ornamented with diamonds, which was presented by the lord mayor, at a banquet very appropriately given by the ironmongers' company, as trustees of an estate left by a Mr. Bretton, for the ransom of christian slaves in Barbary ; he received the freedom of the city of Oxford, with the honorary degree of D.C.L. from that university ; also an elegant gold medal, of which only four were struck, from the prince regent ; while a society, lately established at Paris under the auspices of sir Sidney Smith, for promoting the liberation

of christian slaves, caused a medal to be executed in commemoration of his victory. The promotion which followed was on the usual scale : but lord Exmouth considered it so inadequate, so unjust to the extraordinary merits of his junior officers, especially those in the flotilla, which had been commanded chiefly by mates and midshipmen, that he never rested until he had procured an extension of it from our unworthy admiralty : he even submitted to their lordships a list of officers whom he thought intitled to promotion, drawn up in a manner easy for reference, marking at once his discrimination of their merits, and the warm interest which he took in their welfare : it is not very satisfactory to add, that the half-measures taken by the British government, which, ever since our Revolution, has been proverbial for its ignorance of the manners, customs, constitution, nay, even geographical situation of foreign countries, failed in producing any permanent effect on a tribe of desperadoes, whose very religion teaches them to laugh at treaties made with christians. The dey indeed soon paid the penalty of his defeat ; being strangled a few months afterwards : but piracy again flourished ; slavery was re-established ; and Algiers luxuriated in its old system, until its barbarian hordes dared to insult the majesty of France.

In the early part of this year, Mr. Canning, who was lately returned from Portugal, to which country he had been sent ambassador with an enormous salary, though there was neither a sovereign nor a court to receive him, entered again into office as president of the board of control : those, however, who were anxious for his consistency of character, could not contemplate without regret, his official subordination to a statesman whose policy differed from his own, and whom he had publicly denounced as deficient in capacity for any station of high responsibility : indeed, he soon felt himself in trammels ; and was at length constrained to dissolve a connexion which he found incompatible with his honor.

If the glory of our navy was this year augmented by the brilliant result of its expedition to Algiers, British science obtained a triumph no less signal, but far more durable, in sir Humphry Davy's splendid discovery of the safety-lamp, which has rescued thousands from a dreadful death in the subterranean chambers of the earth. From an analysis of the gas from which such destructive effects had proceeded, he found it to be carburetted hydrogen, which would not explode, if mixed with less than six, or more than fourteen times its volume of atmospheric air ; that neither red-hot charcoal, nor red-hot

iron, was capable of exploding it; and that the explosive mixture could not be fired in tubes of one-seventh of an inch in diameter, when they were opened in the atmosphere; while metal tubes prevented explosion better than those of glass: on these principles he proposed four lamps,—the safety-lamp, the blowing-lamp, the piston-lamp, and the charcoal-lamp; the first three of which are all extinguished, when the air within becomes explosive: the efficacy of all these contrivances was proved by experiment in real fire-damp; but as the extinction of the light in the three most important compelled the workmen to quit their labor, sir Humphry felt that his invention was not yet complete: he therefore continued his inquiries, and at length perfected the lamp now used; in which the light, extinguished at the moment of danger, is raised within the wire gauze into a brighter flame, enabling the miner to pursue his work. Such briefly was the progress of this great invention; one of the finest examples known of experimental research; and one of the most valuable presents which science ever made to man: its utility was everywhere recognised; it was honored by the medals of the royal society, by a magnificent service of plate from the earl of Durham and other proprietors of collieries, and by a beautiful silver-gilt vase from the emperor of Russia, together with a letter expressing admiration of the important discovery.

In March, an expedition, fitted out for the purpose of exploring the interior of Africa, sailed under the command of captain Tuckey; but the pestilential climate proved fatal to that distinguished officer and several of his companions. The year 1816 will be ever memorable to the lovers of art, from the purchase made by parliament of those noble specimens of sculpture which lord Elgin brought from Athens: a select committee had been appointed by the house of commons to consider the subject; and after taking the opinion of the most eminent artists and connoisseurs, all of whom classed these marbles among the most exquisite remains of antiquity, they recommended the sum of £35,000 to be paid as the price of their acquisition. These, together with the *relievos* discovered by Mr. Cockerell at Phigalia, and which had previously been purchased at the expense of £15,000, form a splendid school of sculpture, as it existed in its best days; a noble study for the creation and perfection of British artists: through a mean spirit in our government, and bad management in its agents, we lost those rare specimens which illustrate an intermediate stage of the art, discovered by the above-mentioned gentleman

in the island of Ægina ; and they went to adorn the magnificent glyptothek of Munich. On the twenty-seventh of January, this year, died at Bath the venerable admiral lord Hood, in his ninety-second year ; his younger brother, though senior officer, lord Bridport, had departed this life before him in 1814, at the advanced age of eighty-seven.

At the opening of parliament in 1817, the regent called attention to the existing discontent, and to its causes, which he lamented as not being of a nature to receive immediate remedies : he adverted to the splendid success of our navy at Algiers, and the consequent abolition of Christian slavery ; praised the fortitude of our people in the trials which they endured ; and, considering the great sources of national prosperity essentially unimpaired, expressed a confident expectation that the native energies of this country would at no distant period, surmount all the difficulties in which it was involved. The annual estimates, he observed, had been formed with an anxious desire to effect all reductions in our public establishments consistent with safety and true policy ; but his royal highness regretted that there had been a deficiency in the produce of last year's revenue ; though he trusted that this proceeded from temporary causes, and consoled himself in believing that government would find it practicable to provide for the public service without making any addition to the public burdens. A lamentable comment on this speech quickly followed its delivery ; for the prince, on his return from the house through the Park, was assailed by a violent mob, distressed by sufferings, and taught to believe that his royal highness was insensible to their complaints : stones and other missiles were directed against his carriage, the windows of which were broken by what the attendants conceived to be bullets discharged from an air-gun ; but none were discovered, after the most diligent search. This gross and criminal outrage was communicated to the peers by lord Sidmouth ; when all consideration of public business was deferred till the following day, and a conference held with the commons, at which a joint address was drawn up, congratulating the regent on his escape : a proclamation also was issued, offering a reward of £1000 for the apprehension of the offenders ; but these contrived to escape discovery.

Next evening, earl Grey moved an amendment to the address, chiefly for the purpose of expressing an opinion that his royal highness was under a delusion regarding the degree and probable duration of the pressure on our national resources ; which was declared to be far more extensive in its operations, more

severe in its effects, more deep and general in its causes, and more difficult to be removed, than any which had prevailed at the termination of former wars: to this declaration was added a profession of regret, that the prince regent should not have been sooner advised to adopt measures of rigid economy and retrenchment, particularly with respect to our military establishments; also a resolution that the house should go immediately into a committee on the state of the nation. This amendment was negatived without a division; while a similar one, previously moved in the commons, was rejected by 264 votes against 112: no long time, however, elapsed, before the eyes of almost all were opened to the necessity of making large retrenchments, and of reducing taxation.

On the third of February, a message was communicated to both houses, announcing that the regent had ordered the production of papers which contained an account of certain meetings and combinations held in various parts of the country, tending to disturb public tranquillity, to alienate affection from his majesty's person and government, and to overthrow the whole frame of our laws and constitution: his royal highness recommended these papers to the immediate consideration of parliament; and they were accordingly referred by each house to a secret committee. Another communication, different in its nature, was made to the commons by lord Castlereagh on the seventh of the same month, previously to his moving the appointment of a committee of inquiry into the income and expenditure of the state. His lordship said, that he had it in command from the prince regent to announce, that, sympathising with the sufferings of a generous people, he had determined on a cession of £50,000 per annum from that part of his income which was connected with his personal expenses, as long as the present difficulties should continue: at the same time, his lordship declared the intention of ministers to dispense voluntarily with a tenth of their official incomes, while the necessities of the state should require such a sacrifice: the marquis Camden, one of the tellers of the exchequer, also determined to relinquish the large profits of that sinecure office; retaining only £2500 per annum, the regulated income of future tellers. It was thought that his lordship's example would have provoked other wealthy sinecurists and pensioners to relieve the overburdened exchequer; but no such effects proceeded from this splendid instance of generous patriotism; until, in the year 1836, lord Sidmouth signalled his old age by the relinquishment of an official pension. On a reduced

scale, the expenditure for the year was estimated at less by £6,500,000 than that preceding it; and a farther saving of more than £1,000,000 was anticipated for 1818: the sum of £500,000, in exchequer bills, for public works and fisheries in Great Britain, as well as £250,000 out of the consolidated fund, for similar purposes in Ireland, was voted, in April, as means of alleviating the public distress.

The first report of the committee of inquiry, regarding the abolition of sinecures, was made on the fifth of May; when Mr. Davies Gilbert stated, that in recommending the suppression of certain offices, it was at the same time necessary that his majesty should be enabled to reward meritorious persons, by the power of granting pensions according to the duration of service and the exertions of individuals: a bill, intitled 'The Civil Services Compensation Bill,' was accordingly introduced, with another for abolishing the offices of wardens and justices in Eyre; and these passed through both houses with little opposition. About this time too Mr. Canning exhibited extraordinary powers of eloquence in vindicating his notorious embassy to Lisbon, against a motion made by Mr. Lambton, which was defeated by 270 votes against 96.⁸ At the end of May, Mr. Abbott, finding his health unequal to his laborious duties, resigned the high station of speaker, and was created lord Colchester, with a pension of £4000 to himself and his immediate successor. He was of a sprightly, epigrammatic turn of mind, and had distinguished himself, both at Westminster-school and at Oxford, as a classical scholar: having obtained a seat in the house, he showed much intelligence and diligence in its financial committees, and was taken into favor by Mr. Pitt: he displayed great knowledge of parliamentary forms, with equal firmness in putting them into force; and as he possessed an extraordinary memory, with a calm discriminating judgment, he made a very able and useful speaker; never relaxing his attention, or departing from his dignity. Mr. Charles Manners Sutton, eldest son of the archbishop of

⁸ 'I am hardly recovered,' says lord Dudley, 'from my delight at the splendid victory Canning gained the other evening. It was the greatest effect without exception, that I ever saw produced by a speech in parliament; and is confessed to have been so even by his enemies. I do not believe there is any instance on record of a man having done so much by a single effort to redeem and raise his character; the whole load of obloquy seems shaken off at once; and his prodigious abilities are now left free to carry him to his natural elevation.'—*Letters to the Bishop of Llandaff*, p. 166.

Canterbury, was appointed to the vacant chair; so that, while this gentleman stood at the head of British commoners, his father presided over the spiritual peers; one powerful relative, lord Manners, was chancellor of Ireland, and another, the duke of Rutland, was most conspicuous among our nobles for that borough influence which gave to its possessors the means of controlling government. What could be refused by ministers to a family compact like this?

Mr. Abbott's elevation to the peerage vacated a seat in the commons for the university of Oxford; and to this honor it was known that Mr. Canning had long aspired: but the lord chancellor, his brother lord Stowell, and other leading opponents of the catholic claims connected with that seat of learning, promptly urged their friends in Oxford to start Mr. Peel as an antagonist, on the ground of resistance to those claims: with such supporters and such a plea, as well as abundant merits of his own, Mr. Peel's election was easily secured.

Notwithstanding the expectation of coercive measures to be adopted by administration, a multitude of the lower orders, headed by Henry Hunt and his friends, met in Spa-fields on the tenth of February, under the pretext of petitioning for parliamentary reform; and a similar meeting was held three days afterwards in Palace-yard: nothing remarkable, however, occurred on either occasion. On the eighteenth of February, in the house of lords, and on the following day in that of the commons, the secret committees presented their reports: these commenced, by stating their opinion that treasonable conspiracies had been formed in the metropolis and other parts of our empire, which aimed at the total subversion of law and government, as well as the indiscriminate plunder and division of property: the various steps taken by seditious agitators were diligently traced out in public and private meetings; in the circulation of addresses; in the purchase or manufacture of arms, tricolored cockades, and banners; in exertions made to seduce the soldiers; and in communications regularly held between the conspirators of the metropolis and confederates in other parts of the empire, with an intent to effect a general and simultaneous rising of the people: reference also was made to the existence of societies, under the title of 'Hampden Clubs,' 'Spencean Philanthropists,' and other factions, to extend the plans of anarchy under the guise of constitutional proceedings; also to the administration of secret oaths; to extraordinary measures taken by conspirators for preventing a

discovery of their plots; and to the dispersion of seditious, blasphemous, and inflammatory publications, calculated to destroy all moral and religious feelings, as well as to excite hatred and contempt for existing institutions: finally, the committees expressed a decided opinion, that our civil power, as at present constituted, was insufficient to preserve the peace under such circumstances as had been stated.

Notwithstanding some vagueness of expression, as well as some artifice and exaggeration in these reports; notwithstanding the efforts and even the success of public disturbers, in throwing discredit on authorities, and ridicule on green-bags; it must be confessed, that the constitution was at this time violated on the popular side; and that the security both of the throne and of the altar was threatened by a lawless mob, instigated by designing demagogues. The celebrated acts, which were subsequently passed by our legislature, however they may appear to infringe on the liberty of the subject, were effectual in saving this country from insurrectionary violence and bloodshed, if not from the horrors of anarchy.

The first consequence of the above reports was the apprehension of four persons—the elder Watson, Preston, Hooper, and Keene; who were committed to the Tower on a charge of high treason: a reward of £500 was also offered for the apprehension of a man named Thistlewood, who fled from the charge, but was soon taken and lodged with his associates. In the upper house, lord Sidmouth moved for a suspension of the *habeas corpus* act until the first of July next ensuing; when a bill to that effect, with a protest by eighteen peers, on the ground that our existing laws were adequate to the danger, was passed, and ordered to the commons: it there went rapidly through its different stages, and received the royal assent on the fourth of March. Lord Castlereagh also gave notice of farther measures to protect the country against the arts and machinations of disaffected persons: these were an extension of the act of 1795, for security of the king's person, to that of the regent—the revival of an act of the same year against seditious meetings—a renewal of the act of 1795 against corresponding societies—and a re-enactment of that regarding the seduction of soldiers and sailors from their allegiance. Numerous petitions against these restrictions on public liberty, or rather on public licentiousness, particularly against a suspension of the *habeas corpus*, were presented to parliament: in each house also, during every stage of their rapid progress, they were opposed: but a large majority both of lords and com-

mons participated in the alarm expressed by government : so that all attempts at mitigation in the committee failed ; and the acts themselves received a legislative sanction.

The suspension of the *habeas corpus* act struck an unexpected blow against the hopes and plans of the apostles of reform out of doors : in consequence of it, Mr. Cobbett, who, in the most unequivocal terms, and in that language which he could so well adapt to the taste and comprehension of the people, had told the laboring classes that the remedy for oppression and taxes lay in their own hands, deemed it prudent to retire to America : he promised however to return, as soon as England should be again under the protection of her constitution ; and, in the mean time, to transmit his *Weekly Register* from the land of his exile : he had scarcely departed, when several weekly publications started up, some of them even more violent in language, and outrageous in doctrines, than the *Political Register* had been ; but far behind it in talent, and in the power of exciting the populace to mischief.

When the peers assembled after their Easter recess, it was ordered, on the motion of lord Grey, that a copy of a circular letter recently addressed by the secretary for the home department to the lord-lieutenants of counties, relative to seditious or blasphemous publications, be laid before the house. In that document, lord Sidmouth stated, that, as it was of the utmost importance to prevent the circulation of such works, he had consulted the law officers of the crown, to know whether a person, found selling or publishing them, might be brought immediately by warrant before a justice of the peace, to answer for his conduct ; and their opinion was, that a magistrate might not only issue his order for the apprehension of such an offender, but hold him in bail to answer the charge : under these circumstances, the attention of the lord-lieutenants was earnestly called to the subject ; and they were requested to notify such opinion to the chairman of quarter sessions, in order that magistrates might be led to act on it. When this circular was produced, earl Grey addressed their lordships in a speech replete with legal information ; in which he contended against the principle, that a justice of the peace might be called on by any common informer to decide what was or was not a libel, and to commit or hold to bail, on his sole judgment, the party accused : his lordship also asserted, that such a specific intimation to magistrates, regarding the mode in which they were to construe the law, even supposing that law itself to be clear and undisputed, would have been a high offence

against the constitution: the noble earl's motion, which was for the production of a case that had been submitted to the law officers, was strongly supported by lords Erskine and Holland; but opposed by lords Ellenborough and Eldon, who were of opinion that the law had been correctly stated in the circular, and who carried a majority of the house in their favor: it was negatived on a division by seventy-five against nineteen; and a similar decision was given on the subject in the house of commons, when introduced by sir Samuel Romilly. On the third of June the lord chancellor affirmed, in opposition to a motion of lord Holland, the right of the secretary of state to inhibit the visiting magistrates of any prison from visiting prisoners confined there for state offences; and on the nineteenth, he defended the suspension of the *habeas corpus* act, on plea of the imminent dangers to which the country was exposed. With respect to spies also, he maintained that government, knowing the existence of any plot, was bound to employ such persons, if their aid was necessary to detect and defeat it: the stimulating such persons to go farther was a very different thing.

As the country still continued in a disturbed and alarming state, messages were again sent to both houses from the regent, on the third of June; and the papers produced in consequence, were, as before, referred to secret committees. That of the lords reported, on the twelfth, that after a full consideration of statements laid before them, they were of opinion that the spirit of tumult and insurrection, which gave rise to the bill for suspending the *habeas corpus* act, had by no means subsided; and it was only through its operation, aided by vigilance in the magistrates, and their communications with government, that such spirit could be kept down; also that active preparations were still going on, with a view to subvert the constitution; and that a continuance of the said bill for six months longer was absolutely necessary for the public security. A report of the committee of the lower house traced out the formation and history of several plots at Manchester and in Derbyshire; observing, that confidently as they relied on the general loyalty and good disposition of his majesty's subjects, even in those districts where the spirit of disaffection appeared most strong, they could not but express their conviction, that it was not yet safe to rest intirely for the preservation of tranquillity on the ordinary powers of the law. It was admitted, in the reports, that evidence laid before the committees, had been derived, to a large extent, from the depositions and com-

munications of individuals more or less implicated in the transactions under consideration, or of such as had insidiously engaged in them with a view of giving information to government: this employment of emissaries and spies, sent down among a starving people in the guise of delegates, was vehemently attacked as an atrocious system, stimulating and suborning crime for the very purpose of denouncing it: but ministers strenuously defended the course which had been taken; and a farther suspension of the *habeas corpus* act to the first of March, 1818, was carried by a large majority.

One feature of the session was a committee on the poor laws, which, after sitting for a considerable length of time, with Mr. Sturges Bourne for its chairman, made a report in July. Not much new light was thrown on the subject; for the object of those who took on themselves, or were instructed by government, to manage this committee, seemed to be that of neutralising every topic as much as possible, and of keeping as near to the shore as they could; ministers being embarrassed on the subject, and anxious to avoid experiments: it seems however extraordinary, that after this report no steps were immediately taken to amend, at least, the law of settlement; which abounded with evils that could not be denied: but there was a feeling among many, that our poor laws were fundamentally so impolitic and bad, that to soften their evils would be to delay their final abolition: an event, to which they fondly and absurdly looked.

Another, and still more distinguishing feature, was the speech, in which Mr. Brougham submitted to the commons four resolutions on the state of commerce; when he not only exposed the false system on which parliament had long legislated, but taught and enforced those principles of commercial science, which, adopted as they were afterwards by the more enlightened of our ministry, repealed the navigation laws, and liberated trade. 'The period,' he said, 'is now arrived, when, the war being closed, and prodigious changes having taken place throughout the world, it becomes absolutely necessary to enter on a careful but fearless revision of our whole commercial system; that we may be enabled safely, yet promptly, to eradicate those faults which the lapse of time has occasioned or displayed: to retrace our steps, where we shall find that they have deviated from the line of true policy; to adjust and accommodate our laws to the alteration of circumstances; to abandon many prejudices, alike antiquated and senseless, unsuited to the advanced age in which we live, and unworthy of that

sound judgment which distinguishes this nation. Adverting to the navigation law, he observed,—‘whatever may been the good policy of this law, I am quite clear that we have adhered to its strict enactments for a century after the circumstances which alone justified its adoption have ceased to exist.’

Before the prorogation of parliament, which took place on the twelfth of July, the financial state of the year seemed to improve: the funds rose above twelve per cent.; corn was sold at a good price; and money began to be plentiful both on mortgage and on discount: the Bank of England also began to pay voluntarily in cash; and the chancellor of the exchequer expressed his opinion confidently, that nothing but some extraordinary shock in the political or commercial system would prevent the restriction of cash payments from being taken off in July, 1818.

The disturbances at Manchester, alluded to in the last report of the secret committee of the commons, were of a very extraordinary description: a large body of persons, calling themselves friends of parliamentary reform, and urged by the resolution of despair, determined to proceed unarmed to London, in order to set forth and explain their distress to the regent in person; for which purpose each individual provided himself with a blanket and a small stock of provisions: such crowds however assembled on the appointed day at Manchester, that the civil powers thought it expedient to call out military aid; when a party of dragoons, accompanied by the magistrates of that district, appeared; and having surrounded a scaffold on which stood the principal instigators of this design, seized and carried them off: two men, named Johnson and Ogden, who acted as leaders of the mob on former occasions, had been arrested the preceding morning; and the latter of these worthless persons subsequently acquired much notoriety from an alliterative expression applied to him by Mr. Canning in reference to a bodily infirmity, under which he was laboring; and which subjected that eminent statesman to some of the most virulent and galling attacks that embittered his political career. Though the crowd had been dispersed, a considerable number set out on their mission to the metropolis; but not more than 500 proceeded as far as Macclesfield, where a troop of yeomanry had remained to provide against contingencies: nothing could be more wretched than the appearance of these outcasts; some actually fainting through fatigue, and all without baggage or any resources to sustain them on their march: they penetrated into Staffordshire; but there ended what has been

quaintly termed the 'Blanketteering Expedition.' At this time the general distress of the country, the alarm of ministers, the disposition inherent in subalterns to abuse extraordinary powers, as well as the profligate arts of spies and informers, filled our jails with objects of suspicion or of crime: many were released as arbitrarily as they had been committed; while the more prominent leaders were detained in custody, or sent for greater security to the metropolis: such proceedings contributed much to the exacerbation of parties; acts of justice were confounded, on one side, with acts of violence; while that species of alarmists, who were glad to turn the fears of others to party purposes, contended that nothing but the most coercive measures could put down a revolutionary scheme which was tending towards universal confusion. In the month of June, several inmates of the Tower were arraigned on a charge of high treason: the trial of Watson, which was taken first, lasted some days, and was attended by the leading members of opposition: the prisoner was ably defended by Messrs. Copley and Wetherell; and the principal witness for the crown was an accomplice or spy, named Castles: he underwent direct and cross examinations at great length, and deposed to acts of unequivocal treason and conspiracy; but the infamy of his character, as well as several improbabilities in his narrative, deprived his testimony of credit, and the jury brought in a verdict of 'Not guilty,' amid the reiterated cheers of an immense multitude, by which the very avenues to Westminster-hall were filled: on the failure of this case, the others were abandoned, and the prisoners discharged. During this summer, the turbulent disposition of our manufacturing classes exhibited itself in several of the midland and northern counties; when it was thought expedient to appoint a special commission to sit at Derby for the trial of offenders: the first four arraigned were convicted; nineteen others were allowed to plead guilty, on the understanding that mercy would be extended to them; and against twelve the attorney-general declined to call evidence: twenty-three of these deluded men received sentence of death; but three only, Brandreth, Ludlam, and Turner suffered the extreme penalty of the law. To the machinations of a government spy, named Oliver, many of them ascribed the criminal acts into which they had been led; and the employment of such persons, whose interest led them to foment the plots which they undertook to reveal, was generally condemned: the last of these ministerial efforts was the prosecution of Mr. Hone, for some political parodies of the Litany and

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other parts of our church service, as blasphemous libels. The defendant acted as his own council; resting his plea chiefly on the ground that such parodies were strictly political, and had the negative sanction of uniform toleration; and he cited a very considerable number, which had appeared at different periods, from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. On this trial, which took place before Mr. justice Abbott, he was acquitted; but as there were two more indictments remaining, lord Ellenborough undertook to preside in the court, and interdicted Hone from pursuing the same line of defence; since blasphemy, like other offences, can derive no sanction or protection from previous impunity: it was supposed that the greater experience and authority of the chief justice would impose silence on the accused, and obtain a conviction from the jury; but a greater mistake was never made: Mr. Hone, in the conflict that ensued, exhibited a union of self-possession, energy, and readiness of argumentation, which have seldom been surpassed in a court of justice: during a struggle of many hours, he succeeded in bringing out portions of his obnoxious defence, at one time by artifice, and at another by clamor; while the overbearing authority of a judge, who was generally thought, whether justly or unjustly, to have a strong political bias, gained an easier admission for his vehement appeals to a British jury: a second verdict of 'Not guilty,' was returned; and his lordship came to the charge next day exhausted in spirits and depressed by illness: the contest, on his part, now became more languid; and an appeal to the merciful forbearance of the defendant was even heard from the bench: a third verdict of acquittal ensued; and it was generally supposed, that the already declining health of the lord chief justice was seriously affected by the mortification of spirit which he experienced at these remarkable trials. A large subscription, supported by the names of several distinguished persons, was set on foot to reimburse Mr. Hone for the expense, trouble, and fatigue to which he had been subjected by so many prosecutions; and it is satisfactory to add, that the patronage he received, and the fame he acquired, appear to have infused a better spirit into his moral character; engaging him in literary pursuits, and withdrawing him from that disgraceful career, into which he had so recklessly plunged.

Foreigners, at this time, began to compare this nation to a stately but strained vessel, which, after having weathered the fury of a storm, sinks amid the heaving waves, before their agitation can subside: little however did they know of that

vitality which is inherent in the British constitution, or of that elasticity with which the sons of freedom can repair disasters : little did they know of that numerous body of men existing in this kingdom, possessed both of property and intelligence—men placed between the extremes of power, ever liable to exalt itself, and of ignorance, ever liable to be led astray—who were so disposed, under the blessing of Providence, to be the main safeguard of Britain's grandeur and prosperity. These troubles after a time subsided, to be succeeded by others far more alarming in their aspect ; but none have been able to sink the vessel of the state : one of the most striking effects, however, produced by the distress incident to the times of which we are treating, was a determination taken by the people to search into its causes, with a view to more legitimate modes of relief : thousands began to study the nature of our constitution, who had never before thought on such a subject ; and in proportion as knowledge increased, the outworks of privilege and prescription gave way ; and the strongholds of party were shaken by the increasing energy of constitutional reformers.

In a country like Great Britain, a correct knowledge of the state of its political parties, who during particular periods take a regular share in the proceedings of parliament, is essential to the right understanding of its history. The circumstances which raised the present ministry to power, and reduced the numbers of opposition to insignificance, may be summed up briefly in two particulars ;—the unexpected success of the former in opposing Napoleon ; and the want of prudence in the latter, when political power was either in view, or within their grasp : although ministers were confessedly men of inferior talents, compared with the great statesmen of former times ; and stood at the helm of government in a period of unparalleled difficulties, whether we regard political events, or the state of our commerce and finances,—they exhibited, during those difficulties, great steadiness, and adhered to a line of conduct which required perseverance rather than activity : thus, allowing Bonaparte to destroy himself by his own measures, and holding themselves ready to take advantage of his errors, they acquired much popularity, and retained it unbroken till the events of this year considerably loosened their hold on the affections of the people. No one of the cabinet suffered in this respect more than lord Sidmouth, who, being secretary of state for the home department, was supposed to be more concerned in the suspension of the *habeas corpus*

act, and subsequent measures of coercion, than any of his colleagues: a strong suspicion also of lord Castlereagh's principles began to manifest itself; for it was thought that his love of political freedom, and his attachment to the purity of political principle, had not been strengthened by his long and intimate connexion with continental potentates during the latter period of the war: his conduct however was at least uniform and consistent; but this could hardly be said of Mr. Canning, who joined an administration, for the chief members of which he had expressed great contempt; while his speeches in parliament, able and dexterous as they often were, did not sufficiently impress his hearers with a conviction that they proceeded from principle and feeling.

The opposition, however, was not in a state to take much advantage of circumstances which lowered ministers in the eyes of the people: they had once been in power, and twice had it within their grasp; but at no period did they conduct themselves in such a manner as to secure the confidence of the sovereign or of the nation. Mr. Fox had lost some of his popularity before he came into office in 1806, not so much by his opposition to the French war, as by his reluctance to rejoice in victories gained by British valor: but his union with lord Grenville, and a notion that his easy temper would yield too much to that nobleman's politics, destroyed a more considerable portion of it: on his death, lord Grenville's influence being much increased, the whig ministry became still less popular; nor did the cause of their quitting office obtain for them that favor which they missed by omitting to pursue measures of economical and political reform, while in possession of the cabinet. At the time of the regency in 1811, and afterwards at the death of Mr. Perceval, they had an opportunity of coming into power; but they raised up so many obstacles, that it seemed as if they were desirous of some excuse to decline it: since the latter of those periods, the triumphant termination of the war, contrary to their uniform predictions, weakened their influence both in and out of parliament; while death among their most eminent leaders, of whom they had lost four⁹ within the last two years, reduced their ranks, comparatively, to a state of insignificance. Mr. Tierney was their leader in the house of commons; but lord Grey was the man upon whose character and influence they chiefly relied. He spoke but seldom, reserving himself

⁹ Sheridan and Whitbread, Horner and Ponsonby.

for important occasions; when he always spoke with great effect: his style, however, unlike his general deportment, was somewhat harsh and arrogant; whilst his high aristocratic sentiments, and ostentatious display of attachment to 'his order,' sometimes cast a shade of apparent insincerity over his devotion to popular rights.

Ministers frequently reckoned on lord Grenville's friends for support, and still oftener on the religious party under Mr. Wilberforce; though, on several important occasions, this latter was conscientiously arrayed against them. A new and important class of men, which had lately sprung up in the house, though classed with opposition, was disposed to go much farther on points of innovation and reform: at the head of these was Mr. Brougham; and even his principles were carried out to a still greater length by lord Cochrane and a few others, much inferior in acuteness and political knowlege. The chief distinction between the creed of the regular opposition and that of the reformers, was this:—the former thought that the machinery of government, as then constituted, was good, and efficient for all useful purposes; the latter contended that this machinery was so ill-constructed, and so much out of repair, that no talents, skill, or attention could make it work well. The opposition wished for retrenchment to a certain extent, and for a change in some parts of our domestic and foreign policy; but they did not desire to touch, except slightly and superficially, the house of commons as then constituted: the reformers, on the other hand, wished to change the state of representation materially, and at once; contending that from such a house originated all the distress under which Great Britain was laboring, and that infringement on liberty, which was felt with indignation: they did not however proceed to the length of universal suffrage and annual parliaments, advocated by lord Cochrane, and supported out of the house by the veteran major Cartwright, Cobbett, and Hunt. These contended, that all the evils under which the country lay—excessive taxation, with its consequent poverty and misery—extravagance in the expenditure of public money—in short, every species of mal-administration, arose from a radical defect in the very formation of the house of commons; maintaining, that if its members were chosen annually, and by universal suffrage, they would be more intelligent, more pure, and consequently better able and disposed to legislate solely for the good of the nation. We may briefly observe, that this opinion took for granted, first, that the great mass of our

people were so enlightened and pure, that they would select men also of the most enlightened minds and pure principles to be their representatives; next, that of all great questions brought before parliament, the people were adequate judges; for according to the projected plan of reform, the constituents were to instruct their members, and the latter on all important points to follow those instructions: but we may hope, rather than expect, to see the lower orders of a state brought to such a degree of intelligence and integrity, as this scheme requires. The moderate reformers, however, conscious that even their plans, to be effective, must rest on the foundation of a more liberal and enlightened education, applied themselves earnestly to the great work of reforming the people by such a system: men were encouraged to attend to the cultivation of their understanding; by which they soon began to perceive that they had a capacity above the groveling pursuits of sense: hence a desire of proceeding farther, and of storing their minds with interesting and useful knowledge, increased; while the habit of reflecting more on their best interests increased also: but as it would have been worse than useless to have taught the people to read, and implanted in them a desire to learn, without giving them the means of gratifying that desire in an innocent and beneficial manner, great exertions were subsequently made in the establishment of libraries, lectures, and other institutions, suited to the parties whom they were intended to benefit; and these led ultimately to the publication of those numerous elementary works for the general diffusion of useful knowledge, which have brought the acquisition of it within the reach of all classes.

In the Christmas vacation that able judge in equity, sir William Grant, retired from his office of master of the rolls; being succeeded by sir Thomas Plumer, whose post of vice-chancellor was occupied by the regent's favorite, Mr. Leach; who on this occasion received the honor of knighthood. Toward the close of this year, public attention was diverted from the conflicts of party and machinations of the disaffected, to an event which was felt by the whole nation as a great calamity: the princess Charlotte, the idolised hope of a free nation; she, whose looks of health and smiles of joy had been hailed with heart-felt satisfaction by her future subjects; expired on the sixth of November, after giving birth to a still-born child. The death of this amiable princess was ascribed to the indecision of her medical attendant: in a dreadful state of exhaustion, produced by a long and severe labor, she

was suffered to remain without the slightest stimulant, when the strongest should have been administered ; in consequence of which neglect, nature was unable to rally ; the royal sufferer gradually declined ; and the hopes of a great nation merged in acute and lasting sorrow : brief however as were her days, she cannot be said to have lived in vain, whose life forcibly illustrated the union of happiness with virtue : the day of her funeral, the eighteenth of November, was one of general and unaffected mourning, not only in the metropolis, but throughout the kingdom : it was a day of voluntary humiliation, accompanied by a total cessation from business, and sorrowful meditation on the instability of human joy.

On the thirteenth of February, the silver coinage, ordered last year, was put into circulation : and so rapid was the exchange of the old for the new, that in a few days all was distributed without creating the least confusion : in July came out a new coinage of gold pieces, called sovereigns, value twenty shillings each, weighing five pennyweights, two grains, and three-quarters. The anniversary of the battle of Waterloo was this year distinguished by the opening of that magnificent bridge over the Thames, which by a happy change of name¹⁰ was converted into a national monument to the valor of our army : the prince regent, and the duke of Wellington, with a large concourse of nobility and gentry, graced the procession. The total length of this structure, with its approaches, from the Strand to St. George's-fields, is 2890 feet ; the length of stonework from bank to bank being 1240 : the breadth within the balustrades is forty-two feet, divided on each side by a footway of seven, leaving twenty-eight for the carriage road : it has nine arches, each 120 feet in span ; while its superstructure, running parallel with the water-line, gives to it that elegance and grandeur, which is not equalled by any work of this description in Europe : the whole exterior is executed in durable moor-stone from Cornwall ; and the entire cost did not fall short of £1,260,000. Two dreadful accidents occurred this year, which strikingly illustrate the necessity of prudence both in the adoption and rejection of inventions : a small steam-packet between Norwich and Yarmouth, using a high-pressure engine, and endeavoring to increase its speed, was blown up ; when, out of twenty-two passengers, eight were killed, and many seriously injured : the other occurrence took place at Harraton-colliery, near Durham, where an ob-

¹⁰ It was previously called 'the Strand Bridge.'

stinate man, disdaining to make use of Sir H. Davy's admirable invention, carried a lighted candle into the mine; when an explosion took place, by which thirty-eight men and boys lost their lives: so great was its force, that although the pit was eighty-two fathoms deep, two bodies were blown from the bottom into the open air, as if they had been projected from an enormous piece of ordnance.

France was now relieved from one-fifth of the army which occupied its territory. At the election of members for the chambers, most unworthy arts were adopted by the ministry; but six of the eight elected for the department of Paris were in the popular interests, and government was altogether in a minority: notwithstanding the presence of a foreign force, it was thought necessary to suspend the law for securing personal liberty, and to revive for a time the jurisdiction of prevotal courts for the sake of summary proceedings against seditious persons. In Germany, great discontents manifested themselves, especially among students at the universities: those of Jena invited the rest to send deputies to the Wartburg, near Eisenach, for the purpose of celebrating the battle of Leipsic, where they met in large numbers on the seventeenth of October: the professors and students present went in solemn procession next day to the Wartburg, where an harangue was delivered by one of them; who, after calling to recollection the great day on which the sun of German freedom rose, observed how little the result had answered those expectations which the people were intitled to form; for no prince had yet performed the promise publicly made, except him in whose territories they were then solemnizing the festival: they afterwards burned, at a kind of *auto da fe*, several obnoxious works, as well as instruments and other monuments of old German slavery; and, before they broke up, they pledged themselves to each other, on the sacrament, that they would conscientiously endeavor to carry into execution the obligations which they had imposed on their consciences. In Prussia, a strict censorship was exercised over all political publications; and the Rhenish Mercury, a journal which had obtained extensive circulation, was suppressed. The states of Wurtemberg advanced their constitutional claims, to be confirmed by their king; but he refused to grant them, dissolved the assembly, and took the administration of finances into his own hands. In Austria, the pecuniary embarrassments of government were very great; and in Spain also the finances were in a very distressed condition, which the want of cordiality between the

governors and the governed was little calculated to relieve; in Valencia, the people raised a cry of 'the constitution!' and were with difficulty reduced to submission; while at Barcelona, a formidable conspiracy was detected: the fanatical Ferdinand, in the mean time, signalised his catholic zeal by prohibiting all books which impugned the authority of the pope, or the holy tribunal of the inquisition. In South America, the contest was protracted with various success; but the thread by which the authority of Spain was there held became evidently more slender. In Brazil, the court evinced little disposition to return to Europe; and as Portugal thus became degraded into the rank of a tributary state, a plan for the establishment of an independent government was secretly agitated: but it was soon discovered; and, like those in Spain, terminated fatally to its chief promoters. In North America, Mr. Monroe succeeded Mr. Madison as president; and that country rapidly recovered from the temporary pressure of war; destined, as it would seem, to run an extraordinary career of republican fraud and violence, until it shall either be split by domestic feuds into different states, or be forcibly coerced by a combination of outraged and indignant nations.

CHAPTER LIX.

GEORGE III. (CONTINUED.)—1818.

Opening of parliament—Speech of the commissioners, &c.—Lord Castlereagh's motion for secret committees preparatory to a bill of indemnity—Strenuously opposed, but carried—Reports of the same—Indemnity bill carried—Grant of one million for the building of churches—Bank restriction extended to July 5, 1819—Negotiation with Spain to discontinue the slave trade north of the line—Royal marriages, &c.—Supplies—Alien act—Sir Samuel Romilly's attempt to repeal part of the act against privately stealing in shops, &c.—Motion for a committee by Mr. Brougham to inquire into the education of the poor—Dissolution of parliament—State of the manufacturers of Lancashire—General election—Deaths of sir Samuel Romilly, lord Ellenborough, and queen Charlotte—Ecclesiastical and judicial returns—Increase of forgeries—Price of consols—Bankruptcies—Wager of battle—Determination to pull down Carlton-house, &c.—Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, evacuation of France by the allied forces, &c.—Meeting of new parliament—Duke of York appointed guardian to his majesty—Committee on the criminal code—Measures taken for the resumption of cash payments—Financial statements—Catholic claims—Foreign enlistment act—Reversal of a bill of attainder against lord Edward Fitzgerald—Slave-trade—Emigration—Close of the session—General distress consequent on the alteration of currency—Seditious assemblages—Meeting at Manchester: its dispersion by the yeomanry cavalry attended with loss of life—Trial, sentence, and imprisonment of Hunt and his accomplices—Popular discontents—Meeting of parliament—Evidence on the disaffected state of the manufacturing districts—Restrictions on public liberty—Parliamentary reform—Cession of Parga to the Turks—Continental politics—South American provinces—Public improvements.

THE sixth and last session of the existing parliament was opened by commission on the twenty-seventh of January: the speech was chiefly remarkable for that confident tone in which ministers congratulated the nation and themselves on the return of public prosperity and tranquillity; and it concluded with a recommendation that additional churches should be built, 'to meet the increased population of the country,

and to promote religious and moral habits in the people. The address in the upper house was unanimously agreed to : that in the commons also was carried without a division, but not without animadversion from lord Althorp and sir Samuel Romilly, who strongly deprecated the demoralizing system of *espionnage*, as well as the arbitrary imprisonment and tyrannical persecutions which had been lately carried on by government.

On the fourth of February, lord Castlereagh, by royal command, brought down to the house a bag of papers relating to the internal state of the country, and proposed the appointment of a select committee for their examination ; but as this was understood to be a preliminary step to a general bill of indemnity for every measure taken by ministers under the suspension of the *habeas corpus* act, by which all persons who had been imprisoned and discharged without trial would be debarred from legal remedies,—the motion for a committee was strenuously resisted by the opposition, who contended that a very different sort of inquiry was called for into the conduct of administration : but though the green bag and its contents elicited much lively sarcasm, especially from Mr. Tierney, the committee prayed for was appointed, and a similar one also in the upper house. On the twenty-third of February, this latter made a report, relating chiefly to recent disturbances in the counties of Nottingham, Derby, and York ; to the progress of insurrection, and the check which it had received by various arrests and trials ; as well as to the necessity which existed for continued vigilance against a spirit of conspiracy, which was still active, particularly in the metropolis : this report proceeded to state that forty-four persons had been arrested, under warrants from the secretary of state, who had not been brought to trial, but that such arrests were justified by circumstances ; and no warrant of detention appeared to have been issued except in consequence of information tendered on oath : the persons detained, but not prosecuted, had been at different times discharged ; and government seemed to have exercised the powers with which it had been invested with discretion and moderation. On the twenty-fifth, the duke of Montrose brought in a bill of indemnity, founded on this document, which was strongly defended by the lord chancellor, as the legitimate sequel of last year's bill for a suspension of the *habeas corpus* ; and, after the rejection of an amendment proposed by the marquis of Lansdowne, was carried by a large majority. At its third reading, lord Eldon

inveighed against the doctrine, that libels on the laws and constitution ought to be left unpunished, lest the notice of them should attract greater publicity; and he applauded the exertions made by the attorney-general, sir S. Shepherd, in suppressing seditious and blasphemous publications. When introduced into the house of commons on the tenth of March, by the attorney-general, the bill was strongly opposed by sir Samuel Romilly, who contended that it was improperly called a bill of indemnity: the object of indemnity was only to protect individuals against public prosecution, without interfering with the rights of private persons; but the purport of this bill was to annihilate such rights; to take away all legal remedies from those who had suffered under an illegal and arbitrary exercise of authority. Mr. Lambton, after some forcible observations, moved an amendment, that it be read again that day six months; which, however, was rejected by a majority of one hundred and ninety to sixty-four: it was read a second time on the following day; but the chief discussion took place on the order for committing it, when several petitions, complaining of grievous oppression, were presented to the house; though the allegations contained in them were for the most part grossly exaggerated, distorted, or false: the case chiefly relied on, and which was frequently dressed up afterwards to awaken or keep alive indignation against the tyranny of administration, was that of William Ogden, which represented 'that he was seventy-four years old, with seventeen children; that he had been confined nine months under manacles thirty pounds in weight, which dislocated his arm; and that, being subject to a distressing complaint, he had cried out bitterly for assistance; but no one came to him for sixteen hours, during which time he suffered the most excruciating torture.'

Now it turned out that scarcely a syllable of this statement was true: the man had expressed gratitude for the kind treatment which he received during his confinement; having been cured at the public expense, and with great humanity, of an infirmity under which he had been laboring for twenty years: Mr. Canning, having exposed the abominable falsehoods which pervaded these documents, exclaimed in a tone of pardonable triumph, and without justly exposing himself to any charge of inhumanity;—'the case of the revered and ruptured Ogden may be a very fit one to be brought before the Rupture Society; but to ask for it the decision of parliament is a daring attempt on our credulity;' yet this

harmless pleasantry, which, so far from trifling with human suffering, merely exposed its hypocritical assumption for a base and malignant purpose, was magnified into a crime against human nature, and an outrage on the feelings of the assembly which it insulted; whilst an anonymous pamphlet, which affected the style of Junius, concluded its invectives and denunciations with the following threat:—‘if I should ever be a prisoner of state; and, after being maimed by your jailors, should be assaulted by your jokes,—I will put you to death with the same deliberation as I now give you timely warning: this is no idle, although it is a defensive menace: nor is the resolution confined to one individual: *edem trecenti juravimus.*’

In answer to this attack, Mr. Canning, who was of a very susceptible temperament, addressed a short and explicit note to the anonymous author, through his publisher; in which he observed,—‘To you, sir, whoever you may be, I address myself thus directly, for the purpose of expressing to you my opinion, that you are a liar and a slanderer, and only want courage to be an assassin. I have only to add, that no man knows of my writing to you; and that I shall maintain the same reserve so long as I have any expectation of hearing from you in your own name:’ the writer, however, refused to unmask himself; but sir Philip Francis, to whom the pamphlet, on account of its style, had been attributed, voluntarily came forward, and disclaimed, not only the authorship, but any knowledge of the transaction. The indemnity bill was read a third time on the thirteenth of May, and passed by a majority of eighty-two votes against twenty-three.

According to the recommendation conveyed to parliament by the commissioners, a sum of one million sterling was granted this session, to be raised by exchequer bills, for the purpose of supplying the want of churches, and chapels of ease, where the increase of population rendered such accommodation necessary: a considerable sum was also raised by subscription in furtherance of so important an object. Desirable as it always must be to keep the places of worship for members of our establishment on a par with the population, the equity of a parliamentary grant for such a purpose may perhaps be questioned: when various sects of professing christians complain that they are taxed for the maintenance of our national church, they may be met with an irresistible argument;—that the tithes and lands set apart for such a purpose are a tax on no man: they were settled on the church centuries ago by

persons who had an unqualified right to give or bequeath their property for this or any other lawful purpose: in fact, instead of being a tax, they are an alleviation of taxation; they are a boon to the people, since they provide for all ranks convenient places of divine worship, at free cost, with ministers qualified to promote it: nay, more; they place in every parish a person, on whom it is incumbent to administer comfort and consolation, both to the bodily and spiritual wants of his poorer neighbors: but in the present day, when a sum of money is voted by parliament for the augmentation of churches, a portion of it is taken, against their will, from many who dissent from the doctrines or discipline of our establishment; it is not probable, therefore, that recourse will be often had to such a method of remedying an acknowledged evil: hence the necessity of encouraging that more legitimate mode of private subscription, which, to the credit of our establishment and government, has been promoted by the foundation of a church-building society, the funds of which are augmented from time to time, by king's letters addressed to every officiating minister throughout the realm: of late years, diocesan societies have sprung up in aid of the parent institution; and a spirit has been awakened, which, with God's blessing, bids fair to free our church from this source of danger.

At an early period of the session, Mr. Grenfell inquired of the chancellor of the exchequer, whether any occurrence was likely to prevent the resumption of cash payments by the bank in July; observing, at the same time, that the public stood in the situation of debtor to the bank for £3,000,000 advanced without interest, and for £6,000,000 at an interest of four per cent.; but as the bank had secured possession of a balance of public money deposited in their hands, which for the last twelve years, had amounted on an average to £11,000,000, for the repayment of these sums, he asked whether any arrangement was made for discharging, or placing them on a better footing. Mr. Vansittart, in reply, stated, that the bank had made ample preparation for resuming its payments in cash at the time fixed by parliament; but that pecuniary transactions were going on with foreign powers, which might probably require an extension of the restriction: with respect to the loan of £6,000,000, he should, ere long, submit a proposal for its repayment, allowing the country still to enjoy the benefit of that on which no interest was paid. On a future day, in submitting some propositions to a committee of the house, he

observed, that in January, 1817, the bank had given notice of its readiness to pay in specie outstanding notes of a particular description, for which cash to the amount of about £1,000,000 might have been demanded; but a very inconsiderable sum was called for. At that time gold bullion was reduced to £3. 18s. 6*d.*, and silver to 4s. 10*d.* the ounce: in October, notice was given that the bank was ready to pay in cash all notes dated prior to January, 1817; but the result was very different, for upwards of two millions and a half were drawn out, of which scarcely any portion remained in circulation: this arose from large remittances to foreign countries consequent on the importation of corn, the residence of Englishmen on the continent, and the negotiation of a loan in this country by France; it now therefore became inexpedient for the bank to resume cash payments; and the restriction was continued till the fifth of July, 1819. The treaty with Spain, by which, in consideration of a subsidy of £400,000, she consented to abolish the slave-trade on all the coasts north of the line, retaining however the privilege of continuing it indefinitely to the south of that limit, received the sanction of parliament: for each nation a right of search was stipulated; but no detention of vessels was to take place, unless when slaves were found actually on board.

The death of the princess Charlotte, and consequent failure of a direct succession to the crown, seem to have induced several members of the royal family to enter into the marriage contract. Princess Elizabeth, the old queen's favorite daughter, had in the early part of this year been led to the altar by the prince of Hesse Homberg: the duke of Clarence was now united to a princess of Saxe Meiningen; the duke of Kent to a princess of Leiningen, sister of prince Leopold; and the duke of Cambridge to a princess of Hesse. Suitable provisions for the royal pairs were made by parliament, at the recommendation of the regent; but though ministers came to the house on this occasion ready to propose most extravagant grants, the strong observations addressed to lord Castlereagh by Mr. Tierney and other members, induced the noble secretary to modify his intended propositions: indeed, a motion made for allowing the equitable sum of £10,000 per annum to the duke of Clarence, was met by an amendment, which was carried, limiting the grant to £6000, as well as to his royal brothers: through a conciliatory appeal of his lordship, a like sum was voted, as a provisionary reversion to the duchess of Cumberland, after it had been refused, by a large majority, to her

royal consort. During these discussions, Mr. Wilberforce took occasion to inveigh against the royal marriage act, which prevented the several branches of the august family on our throne from entertaining the best of human feelings, and from forming connexions, which might at once promote their happiness and guarantee their virtue: it seemed to imply that they could be rendered better political characters by being made worse men; which was a most mistaken notion, as well as immoral doctrine. Certainly the political evils of this act became now apparent in its effects on the succession, when there remained to the reigning monarch no legitimate descendant either of the male or female branches, and the nation had in prospect a broken lineage and a doubtful throne.

In May the lord chancellor introduced a bill, which passed into a law, for amending the regency acts. Its objects, were to increase the number of the queen's council, and to dispense with the necessity of an immediate meeting of parliament, in case of her majesty's death. The same noble person opposed sir R. Peel's bill, for abridging the labor of children in cotton factories, when brought into the upper house, 'confessing himself one of those who really thought that philanthropy had not taken its right course in modern times.'

The supplies of this year were estimated at £20,952,400; to meet which, in addition to the ways and means, a three and a half per cent. stock was created, to the amount of £14,000,000; so that no new taxes were levied, nor any additions made to the old ones. The alien act was continued for two years; it being considered necessary to keep out, as well as to send out, of Great Britain, persons who might take advantage of the vicinity of France to excite a spirit hostile to the security of this and other European governments. That enlightened legislator, sir Samuel Romilly, introduced a bill to do away with the capital part of the act respecting privately stealing in shops, &c.; setting forth in his preamble the maxim, that extreme severity of punishment tends to procure indemnity for crime: the attorney-general, horror-struck at this general principle, besought the house to expunge it; but the authority of sir Samuel, who declared that the acts of modern legislation recognised no principle whatsoever, while he wished to pursue the reasonable course of setting forth in the preamble that on which his bill was founded,—carried both through the commons: but when this humane measure of sound policy was presented to the lords for their concurrence, the cry against innovation was reiterated from the woolsack: the bill was

rejected, and a measure of great and salutary efficacy was postponed for many years, until it was taken up by a more fortunate statesman. The present was the sixth time that the house of commons had agreed to abolish the punishment of death in the case of stealing in shops and warehouses under a certain amount; and for six times had lord Eldon's resistless influence with the lords succeeded in averting such improvement from the laws of criminal justice: in like manner, he opposed the abolition of capital punishment for the offence of stealing from the person; but as that measure had been sanctioned by the legislature, he drew the following conclusion from it in opposition to the present bill, when it was first proposed:—'you have already,' said his lordship, 'committed enough of mischief by the forty-eighth of George III.: for God's sake take care what you do! prosecutions are now twenty to one, compared with what they were under the old state of the law: there is a bounty given to crime, and crime accordingly increases.' Who would impute to a man of lord Eldon's mild and benevolent disposition a spirit of sanguinary and gratuitous severity? but it is worthy of remark, how the adoration of 'things that be' can blind a vigorous intellect, when he was unable to perceive that the number of prosecutions had increased, not that of crimes: it was, in fact, one of the main objects of the bill to induce men to prosecute; and twenty would naturally be impelled to seek for a mitigated penalty, when scarcely one would demand the capital punishment; his lordship, however, clung to an old system, with an obstinacy which wanted only a good cause to become perfect heroism: eloquence and argument might carry the outworks of his citadel, or even beat the venerable cambric about his ears; but to terms he would not listen.

Before the close of this session, Mr. Brougham succeeded in his motion for a committee of inquiry respecting the education of the poorer classes,—the first step toward that system of popular instruction, in which this eminent person has effected so much. Fourteen commissioners were to be appointed by the crown, six of whom were to have no salaries: but the bill underwent many alterations in its passage through the upper house, where lord Eldon used all his influence against it, declaring that it was a vexatious measure, calculated to deter men of honor and character from undertaking the responsibility of charitable trusts; and recommending the poor, with a simplicity peculiar to himself, to seek a redress of grievances against the rich in the court of chancery! in that court which,

second only to the evil of intestine war, facilitated the usurpation of property ; reduced widows and orphans to the necessity of begging their bread ; and, by its insuperable forms of delay, racked the brain of manhood until insanity relieved the wretched suitor from the horrors of a judicial purgatory ! The commissioners to be appointed by this bill were limited to the investigation of charities connected with education : they were precluded from investigating the state of education among the poor generally ; and they were directed to traverse the country, and to call witnesses before them, without possessing any authority for enforcing attendance, or for demanding the production of documents. Mr. Brougham observed, that the bill, as it now stood, left every thing to the good-will of those who had an interest at variance with the inquiry ; yet good might still arise from the exercise of powers possessed by the house itself : the means to be used were, that the commissioners should proceed and call witnesses ; that they should report occasionally to the house, and make returns of all persons refusing to give information, or to produce documents, without just cause of refusal ; and the committee, which would be re-appointed next session, might be empowered to call those individuals before them.

Parliament was dissolved, on the tenth of June, by the regent in person ; who, in concluding his speech, congratulated both houses on the manifest improvement which had taken place in the internal circumstances of the country, and which promised to be steadily progressive : distress, however, though mitigated, still prevailed ; and the cotton-spinners, as well as other classes of manufacturers in Lancashire, remained in a state of organised opposition to their masters on the subject of wages : from this cause several partial disturbances arose ; one in particular at Burnley, and another at Stockport ; but through the prompt exertions of the Manchester yeomanry, these irruptions were suppressed without bloodshed : it is probable, however, that considerable bitterness of feeling was mutually excited between the yeomanry and the lower classes, which subsequently burst forth with calamitous fury. A kind of diversion from present troubles was created by the general election which took place this summer. Sir Samuel Romilly, the enlightened statesman, the philosophic lawyer, and the eloquent advocate of every noble and generous cause, was returned for Westminster without personal solicitation, or any species of patronage ; but he had not long been honored by this testimony of public approbation, when, overcome by a domestic

calamity, which unsettled his reason, he put a period to his existence. About the same time, the nation suffered another loss in one of the most eminent of its judicial functionaries, when lord Ellenborough, who had for sixteen years presided over the seat of criminal justice, resigned that high situation; and quitted the scene of life on the thirteenth of December: his advancement had been extremely rapid; but his early path had been trodden with great care and diligence: to a bold and manly address, a discriminating intellect, and a nervous eloquence, he added deep application, and patient study of his profession; while he possessed, in a high degree, that feeling of superiority which is almost sure to command success: in his court he was sometimes harsh and hasty, and his temper was such as might have led many men of less capacity into error; but the sight of his mind was so clear and quick, that he penetrated a question and its solution, before many would have comprehended the terms in which it was proposed. His adversaries charged him with a strong inclination towards arbitrary principles; but the chief cause of such an imputation, was that utter scorn of popular applause which he always exhibited: another perhaps arose from his frequent visits at Carlton-house, with the royal master of which he was on terms of close intimacy. Mr. justice Abbott succeeded his lordship on the bench, with increasing honor to himself, and advantage to the public: the death, however, of a still more exalted personage this year remains to be recorded. In consequence of the queen's declining state of health, two amendments had been made in the regency bill last session; the one empowering her majesty to add six members to her council, resident at Windsor, in the event of her own change of residence; the other repealing a clause, which rendered a new parliament necessary in case of her demise: these amendments were opportunely made; for, after a lingering illness of six months, borne with becoming fortitude and resignation, her majesty expired at Kew on the seventeenth of November, in the seventy-fifth year of her age. The character of queen Charlotte would scarcely require comment, had not the spirit of the times, particularly during the latter part of her life, cast on it much and unmerited obloquy: the truth is, that her disposition was formed rather to secure respect than to command affection; though her sense of decorum might border on austerity, and her love of economy carry her a little beyond the bounds of regal propriety; yet proofs are not wanting of her readiness to assist distress and to patronise merit: she possessed a strong

and sound judgment ; using her influence with much discretion, and declining a too anxious or busy interference in affairs of state ; if we except very frequent and importunate requests for the disposal of ministerial patronage :¹ as a wife and mother, she was very exemplary ; and during the long period in which she presided over the British court, she preserved it from the contamination of vice, notwithstanding the dangers proceeding from the licentious example of other European dynasties ; and from that moral relaxation, which our own rising prosperity was calculated to produce : her majesty's remains were interred, on the second of December, in the magnificent vault of St. George's chapel ; prepared by him, whom a merciful Providence preserved from the knowledge of those ravages, which death was making among the dearest objects of his affection.

During this year, returns were made to parliament respecting our ecclesiastical establishment in England and Wales ; when the number of benefices was found to be 10,421, and that of churches and chapels 11,743, for a population of 9,940,391 : the glebe houses fit for residence amounted to 5417 ; the total number of benefices not exceeding £100 per annum was 2274 ; while those of £150 and under reached the number of 3503.² In the present year, also, tables were made out for a considerable number of years past, relating to prosecutions for forging on, or passing forged notes of, the Bank of England : and the result turned public attention strongly to the necessity of the great remedy for this increasing evil, in the resumption of cash payments : within the two years and two months immediately preceding the twenty-fifth of February, there had been fifty-six capital convictions on this account, and 288 prosecutions ; juries also now began to show unwillingness to bring in a verdict of guilty against parties accused : two at the Old Bailey, on the fifth of December, acquitted the persons tried before them, because the clerk of the bank refused to explain the marks whence he believed the notes to be forged.

¹ Lord chancellor Eldon in his correspondence complains much of this interference with his rights of patronage.

² One of the greatest evils of our establishment seems to be the disproportion between the highest and lowest classes of its benefices : this however is now receiving some alleviation from the wise regulations of a church commission. In noticing the efforts making to remedy this evil, it would be unjust to pass over the noble exertions of bishop Blomfield in the metropolis ; and the disinterested conduct of Dr. Monk, bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, who has appropriated one-tenth of the gross revenue of his see to the augmentation of its small livings.

The revenue of the country was this year less by £14,000,000 than its expenditure; yet the three per cent. consols rose as high as 81½, and closed in December at 79: the total number of bankruptcies in 1818 was 1056, which was a decrease of 519 from that in 1817; and the amount of money deposited in the savings-banks, up to the thirteenth of July, was £1,254,021. This year, an extraordinary case of law was decided in the court of king's bench: Abraham Thornton had been tried at Warwick assizes for the murder of Mary Ashford, and acquitted; circumstances however appeared so strong against him, that the verdict was deemed unsatisfactory, and an appeal against it was laid by William Ashford, brother of his supposed victim: on this, a wager of battle was demanded by the accused, who cast down his glove in open court, according to ancient custom, defying the accuser to mortal combat: so unusual a procedure determined the court to take time in considering the case; and on the sixteenth of April, it decided that the law gave to the accused a right to his wager of battle; but the appellant, who was quite a youth, and very inferior in bodily strength, declined the challenge, and the defendant was discharged; in the next session of parliament, however, a law passed to repeal trial by battle, as well as appeals in the case of murder.

While the regent was indulging his capricious taste in architecture and upholstery at Carlton-house, aided by a council of professional men and amateurs, the decease of her majesty took place; and as Buckingham-house then became disposable, it was determined to take down Carlton-house altogether, and convert the queen's mansion into a palace fit for the residence of a British monarch: this resolution was important, from the additional impulse given by it to architecture, which of all the arts, has of late years been most encouraged in Great Britain; and from the consequent improvement of its now splendid metropolis. The conclusion of this year was marked by the accession of the duke of Wellington to the cabinet, which he entered as master-general of the ordnance, on the retirement of lord Mulgrave.

In order to complete the design of the allied sovereigns, as far as could be done by outward forms, there was still wanting a full and perfect reconciliation with France: after arrangements, therefore, had been made for a discharge of those pecuniary engagements into which she had entered, it was notified to her ministry, by the congress sitting at Aix-la-Chapelle, that all military occupation of her territory would

cease; and the measure was carried into execution in October; when France was adopted into the alliance: at the same time, a declaration of the principles actuating this great monarchical confederacy was published; which asserted that its object was not directed towards any new political enterprises, nor intended to disturb any relations already subsisting between powers, and consecrated by various treaties still in force: in its steady and peaceful course, it was said to aim at nothing so much as the preservation of tranquillity, while it engaged to observe strict obedience to the maxims of popular right; since the constant application of those maxims to a permanent state of peace afforded the only effectual guarantee for the independence of each separate power, and the security of the whole confederation. Professing fidelity to these principles, the allied sovereigns undertook to observe them in the various conferences which might from time to time be held, either between themselves, or their respective ministers; promising that they would never cease to labor in strengthening and perfecting the work which they had so far completed; while they solemnly acknowledged, that their duty toward God and their subjects imposed on them the obligations of justice, unanimity, and moderation.

If this declaration had confined itself to the real object of alliance,—the preservation of peace in connexion with *legitimacy*,—it would, at least, have obtained credit for sincerity and consistency; but when it talked of the maxims of popular right, as guiding the allied sovereigns, while they tolerated the wicked conduct of the *beloved* Ferdinand, and that of every other bigoted and tyrannical sovereign in Europe, it allowed people to suppose that sinister motives and ambitious views were concealed in the background.

The new parliament assembled on the fourteenth of January, when Mr. Manners Sutton was re-elected speaker of the commons without competition, and chief baron Richards took his seat on the woolsack in consequence of the lord chancellor's indisposition. Among other topics, the royal speech alluded to the favorable state of our revenue, and to the improved aspect of trade, commerce, and manufactures; while the public income still fell short of the expenditure by £14,000,000; and the most serious disturbances were fermenting in the very heart of our manufacturing districts: mention also was made of an extension of the commercial treaty now existing between this nation and the United States, to a farther term of eight years. Ministers were severely handled in the upper house by lord

Lansdowne, and in the lower by Mr. Macdonald; the latter of whom treated as extravagant their representations of the state of the country in the speech and address; describing them as distinguished by egregious political blunders, and great military success; as unable to arrive at an opinion on such leading questions of government, as the currency, the poor laws, law reform, or the catholic question; and as sustained only by the divisions of party, between the public apathy on one side and public disgust on the other: in both houses, however, the addresses were agreed to without a division.

On the twenty-fifth of February, lord Kenyon moved in the house of lords for a committee to inquire into the condition of factory children; when the chancellor, without opposing the motion, 'desired to have it known, that the over-working of children was an offence indictable at common law. He saw no reason why the master manufacturers and the master chimney-sweepers should be subjected to the operation of different principles from those applied in other trades: if any measure of this kind were tried, it ought to comprehend manufacturers of all descriptions.' The result was the statute 59 George III. cap. 16, limiting the time of labour, in cotton mills and factories, to twelve hours for persons under sixteen years of age, and prohibiting the employment of children under nine.

As the queen's demise rendered it necessary that a guardian of his majesty's person should be appointed, lord Liverpool named the duke of York; and the propriety of his nomination was universally admitted: but a second proposition, that the duke should receive a salary of £10,000 per annum out of the public purse for the performance of this duty, was met with vehement opposition, and carried by only a small majority: a proposal for paying this sum out of the privy purse was indignantly opposed by lord Eldon; who objected to the king's privy purse being made liable, like the property of a subject, to his maintenance during lunacy; for his majesty was intitled, both in health and sickness, to a maintenance by the nation, irrespectively of his privy purse: several debates subsequently took place respecting the Windsor establishment, the expenses of which excited much freedom of remark both in and out of parliament; it being represented as a mockery of national distress, no less than of the melancholy visitation of the royal personage himself; kept up for the purpose of ministering to the prodigality of a prince; and to the rapacity of courtiers.

The English character is far from being distinguished by a tendency to cruelty; yet perhaps no nation ever sustained

greater reproach on that score from foreigners than our own, chiefly through the severity of our laws, which enacted the punishment of death for so large a catalogue of offences. But to prove how little this reproach was merited, it may be sufficient to state, that an evil of great magnitude had arisen from the very merciful disposition of the nation, shown, not only in its aversion to prosecute offences, but in the inclination of juries to save offenders from the operation of a barbarous system of criminal jurisprudence: thus crimes increased, in proportion as men found they might commit them with impunity.

The state however of our criminal code had for some time occupied the attention of parliament, under whose notice it had frequently been brought by sir Samuel Romilly, one of the few English lawyers who could ascend from petty details to general principles, and combine a generous eloquence with a practice of the law. Over this genuine philanthropist the grave had unfortunately closed; but it is one of the glories of Britain, that no great national scheme can be frustrated by a single loss: the branches on each stem of her noble constitution are numerous as well as healthy;—*Uno avulso, non deficit alter Aureus*: in the present instance, the enlightened views disclosed by sir Samuel Romilly were followed up by sir James Mackintosh; nor could the cause have fallen into abler hands. A petition from the corporation of London, complaining of an increase of crimes, and pointing out the advantages likely to ensue from the commutation of capital punishments for others less vindictive in their nature, was referred to a committee, appointed, on a motion of lord Castle-reagh, for the examination of prison discipline: it was thought, however, by persons best informed and most deeply interested in the business, that, for due consideration of so extensive and important a subject as our penal code, a distinct committee should be formed; and to that effect, sir James Mackintosh made a motion on the following day. After setting forth a variety of observations and facts, illustrating the system of subterfuge, which the extreme severity of our law in many cases had produced among prosecutors, witnesses, and jurors, with the consequent impunity of offenders and increase of crime; he denied any intention of recommending a new criminal code, or of abolishing a system admirable in its principles, and interwoven with the habits of the people: he did not even propose to lay aside capital punishment; on the contrary, he regarded it as a part of that right of self-defence with which societies are endowed: he held it to

be, like all other punishments, an evil when unnecessary ; but capable, like them, of producing, when sparingly and judiciously inflicted, a preponderance of good : he aimed not at the establishment of any universal principle ; his sole object was, that the execution of the law should constitute the majority, and its remission the minority of cases. Sir James subsequently divided the cases connected with capital punishment into three classes ; those in which it was always, those in which it was frequently, and those in which it was never put in force : he proposed to leave, at present, the first and second division untouched : the third, comprising no fewer than one hundred and fifty different crimes, ought, he conceived, to be expunged from the list, as a monument of barbarous times, disgraceful to the character of a free and enlightened nation. Lord Castlereagh complimented the mover of this question on the candid and moderate spirit in which he had brought it forward ; nevertheless, his lordship persisted in opposing, as unnecessary, the appointment of a separate committee : other members, however, warmly supported the motion, which was ultimately carried by 147 votes against 128 ; and before the session closed, the committee, of which sir James was chairman, having examined evidence, reported progress on this interesting subject of inquiry.

A period had now arrived, when it was impossible to defer any longer a consideration of our national currency. In 1793, a transfer of labor from the employments of peace to those of war caused a great derangement among the productive classes ; and to another transition, from a state of war to one of peace, was ascribed by the ruling powers of the day all the distress which occurred in 1816 : it is undeniable, that an abrupt diversion of capital from its usual form of employment is always attended with loss, and commonly with distress ; but other causes were in operation at the time, which must have produced great distress if the war had continued : the transition from a state of war to peace undoubtedly added to the distress ; but was by no means the sole cause of it.

When, through agricultural depression, country notes were extensively withdrawn from circulation, the Bank of England was urgently pressed for an extended accommodation ; and, being relieved from immediate apprehension of having to pay in gold, it materially extended its issues : now, had war continued under these circumstances, it is very likely, that when low prices had taken the superabundance of grain out of the market, they would have advanced ; country bank notes might

again have been put out to as great an extent as before; the currency might have been even more depreciated than in 1812; and the mint standard of value might, in the end, have been altered: in this way, it is possible that a continuance of the war might have given rise to a measure which would have had a beneficial effect in relieving the people from a part of the burden of fixed money payments: but it was considered that peace rendered preparation necessary for returning, at no distant period, to the old metallic standard of value, and for repealing the bank restriction act: hence, not only did the Bank of England begin to reduce the quantity of its paper in circulation, and to increase its stock of gold; but country bankers were compelled to limit their issues, since they also would be more liable to be called on to pay in gold: such considerations, no doubt, induced a more cautious issue of notes; and the quantity of the currency was kept down nearly to what it would have been if the exports had been suffered to draw gold from the commercial world to furnish a metallic currency for Great Britain. The bill, commonly called 'Peel's bill,' passed this year; and it caused such preparation to be made as removed a depreciation of sixteen and a half per cent. from the currency of 1816, and three or four per cent. from that of 1817 and 1818, and at last restored it to its old standard value: any farther alterations in the value of the currency, and of general money prices are attributable, not to Peel's bill, but to other causes, which would have had the same powerful influence on the exchangeable value of gold if that bill had not passed. Peel's bill enacted, that the Bank of England should be liable to pay its notes in gold in 1823; and in the interim to pay them in gold bars at standard value, of not less than sixty ounces weight: but the Bank, having acquired a large stock of gold in 1821, commenced paying in coin on the twenty-first of May that year; and thus terminated the period, during which, under the sanction of law, our currency was depreciated by an excessive issue of paper, which increased its quantity beyond that which would have been determined by the supply of gold. The celebrated bill, however, above alluded to, being one of the most important and most canvassed of all that are contained in our statutes, demands a more circumstantial account of the manner in which it was brought forward and carried.

A motion by Mr. Tierney, on the second of February, for a committee to inquire into the effects of the bank restriction act, was met by an amendment from the chancellor of the

exchequer, directing an investigation of the state of the Bank of England, with reference to the expediency of its resumption of cash payments at the appointed period; such information to be reported by the committee as might be disclosed without injury to public interests. The first report was brought up by Mr. Peel on the fifth of April; and it represented, that the bank, having been induced to pay in specie all notes issued previous to 1817, had been drained of cash to the amount of more than £5,000,000; most of which had found its way to the continent, where it had been recoinced; and that, to prevent this drain continuing, and to enable the bank to accumulate a larger store of bullion, with a view to the final resumption of cash payments, it was expedient to restrain farther payment of the notes alluded to in specie: a bill was accordingly brought in; and the standing orders having been suspended, it was passed through its different stages the same evening. In the course of discussion, Mr. Manning, one of the bank directors, attributed the drain on the bank, and the efflux of our specie, to the French loan, as well as to a deficient harvest; corn having been imported by us to the amount of £10,000,000. In the upper house, lord Harrowby moved a suspension of the standing orders, that the bill might pass through all its stages at one sitting; which earl Grey and others opposed at considerable length; contending, that, if necessary, ministers would have done better by issuing an order of council to suspend bank payments on their own responsibility: next day, however, the bill was read three times, and passed: a similar measure was also carried for the protection of the Bank of Ireland. The second report was presented on the fifth of May; when two bills were passed, founded on a plan recommended by the committee, for a gradual return to cash payments; of which the principal provisions were, that a definite period should be fixed for the termination of the restriction; while preparatory measures should be taken, with a view to facilitate and ensure, on the arrival of that period, payment of promissory notes of the Bank of England in legal coin of the realm; that provision ought to be made for the gradual repayment of £10,000,000; being part of the sum due to the bank on account of advances for the public service; that, from the first of February, 1820, the bank shall be liable to deliver, on demand, gold of standard fineness, having been assayed and stamped at the Mint; a quantity of not less than sixty ounces being required in exchange for notes, at the rate of four pounds one shilling per

ounce ; that, from the first of October, 1820, the bank shall be liable to deliver gold at the rate of three pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence per ounce ; and, from the first of May, 1821, at three pounds seventeen shillings and tenpence halfpenny ; that the bank may, at any period between the first of February and the first of October, 1820, undertake to deliver gold, as before mentioned, at any rate between the sums of four pounds one shilling and three pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence per ounce ; and at any period between the first of October, 1820, and the first of May, 1821, at any rate between the sums of three pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence and three pounds seventeen shillings and tenpence halfpenny per ounce ; but that, such intermediate rate having been once fixed, it shall not be subsequently increased ; that from the first of May, 1823, the bank shall pay its notes on demand in the legal coin of this realm ; and that it is expedient to repeal the laws prohibiting the melting or exportation of the coin.

Another select committee was appointed, on the motion of lord Castlereagh, to inquire into the income and expenditure of the country ; from which he anticipated a very favorable result. The receipts for the year, ending on the fifth of January, 1818, were £51,665,458, while those for the following year were £54,620,000, showing a large increase on the latter : but there were certain arrears of war-duties on malt and property, which reduced the income of 1818 to £49,334,927 ; while the arrears to January, 1819, amounted only to £566,639 : the expenditure was also less by about £650,000 than was expected : so that the result was, as his lordship said, ‘ a total surplus of £3,558,000, applicable to the reduction of our national debt. If one million were allowed for the interest on the loan, there remained two millions and a half of surplus revenue.’ Mr. Tierney observed, that an old debt on the sinking fund, of £8,300,000, which must be liquidated before the surplus in question could be made available for the expenses of the current year, had been altogether kept out of view : the various taxes, taken together, exceeded £7,000,000 ; but this was the extreme amount, applicable to the army, the navy, the ordnance, and miscellaneous services : how then could it be possible, he asked, that with an income of only £7,000,000, and an expenditure of £20,000,000, both ends could be made to meet, and a surplus be left ? Would it not be a gross delusion, to speak of the sinking fund as applicable to the public service, while government was obliged to borrow

£13,000,000 a-year to support it? The chancellor of the exchequer observed, that this statement included certain particulars, which could not be admitted in making a fair comparison: by taking the whole charge of the consolidated fund and the sinking fund, it had been shown that our expenditure considerably exceeded our receipts: this must necessarily be the case, after so many of the war-taxes had been abolished. Parliament had thought fit to relieve the country from fifteen millions in taxes, and thus unavoidably prevented the effect which would have resulted from a redemption of the debt by these fifteen millions annually: with respect to any plans of finance for the present year, he should reserve to himself the power of adopting that which the situation of public affairs rendered most expedient.

On the thirtieth of March, and again on the twentieth of May, Mr. M. A. Taylor renewed his motions on the subject of delays in chancery. The first of these, which was for an account of the total amount of the property of suitors in 1756, and every tenth year down to 1818, was agreed to. 'Its object (he said) was to show the great increase of business in that court, and to lay a ground for providing means by which the delays so complained of might be remedied.' In his second motion, which was in substance a proposal to separate the jurisdiction in cases of bankruptcy from the great seal, he eulogised the talents, wisdom, learning, and diligence of lord Eldon, as well as the clearness, precision, and integrity of his judgments; but averred that the duties of the court, as it then subsisted, were too heavy to be discharged even by those great faculties. This change, however, in the jurisdiction of the great seal, was known to be most unpalatable to its holder, and was rejected by a large majority.

On the third of June, Mr. Vansittart submitted a series of financial resolutions; which stated that, through the removal of certain taxes, the revenue of Great Britain was reduced by £18,000,000; that the interest and charge of the funded and unfunded debt of Ireland exceeded the whole revenue of that country by £1,800,000: that it was necessary to provide by a loan, or other means, for the service of the present year, the sum of £13,000,000; which, deducted from the sinking fund of £15,000,000, reduced it to only £2,000,000; and that, for the purpose of raising this sinking fund to £5,000,000, it was absolutely necessary to impose new taxes to the amount of £3,000,000 annually: this sum parliament ultimately agreed to raise by a considerable duty on foreign wool, and by smaller

duties on other articles, such as tobacco, tea, coffee, and cocoanuts. Two loans, of twelve millions each, were also raised; one of them supplied by the monied men, the other derived from the sinking fund: out of these sums there was to be a surplus, of which £5,000,000 were to be applied toward repayment of the debt due to the bank, as recommended by parliament previous to the resumption of cash payments; and £5,597,000 to the reduction of the unfunded debt. In adopting this course, observed the Speaker, in his address to the regent at the close of this session, 'his majesty's faithful commons did not conceal from themselves that they were calling on the nation for a great exertion; but well knowing that honor, character, and independence have at all times been the first and dearest objects of Englishmen, we felt assured that there was no difficulty which the country would not encounter, no pressure to which she could not cheerfully submit, in order to maintain pure and unimpaired that which has never yet been shaken or sullied—her public credit and good faith.' After numerous petitions had been presented to parliament, both for and against the claims of Roman catholics, this great question of internal policy was again brought before the commons by Mr. Grattan, on the third of May. The causes of disqualification, he asserted, were of three kinds—the combination of the catholics; the danger of a pretender; and the power of the pope: he insisted, that not only all these causes had ceased, but that the consequences annexed to them were no more; and he concluded by moving for a committee of the whole house, to take into consideration the laws by which oaths or declarations are required to be taken or made as qualifications for the enjoyment of office, or the exercise of civil functions, so far as the same affect Roman catholics; and whether it would be expedient to alter or modify the same. This motion was lost, on a division, by a majority of only two, in a very full house. On the seventeenth, a corresponding proposition was submitted to the peers by the earl of Donoughmore, who contended that the state of the catholic question had been much altered: all anti-christian principles and uncharitable surmises were disallowed by its opponents; and the great objection was limited to an arguable supremacy, which was supposed to be inherent in a foreign state: if he were allowed to go into a committee, he would first get rid of the declaration, and next dispose of the oath of supremacy; when there would remain no vestige of such tests, except the oath of abjuration, now of no practical use, as it referred to a non-existent family. The bishop of

Worcester opposed this motion, on the ground of danger to the church and state; which danger, it was argued by the bishop of Norwich, did not exist; and we ought to remember the precept of doing unto others as we would they should do unto us: the bishop of Peterborough declared, that if the present were merely a religious question, it should have his support; but it was evident, the grand object of the catholics was political power; while the earl of Liverpool denied that concession would have the effect of allaying animosities in Ireland, or that the interests of the great mass of its people would be promoted by it in the smallest degree: the lord chancellor also strenuously opposed the motion, chiefly for the oft-refuted reason, that the Romanists could give no security by oath which would reconcile the king's supremacy in things temporal with the pope's supremacy in things ecclesiastical: on a division, the motion was negatived by 147 against 106; and another effort, in favor of this question, was made in the upper house by earl Grey, but without effect. As the reduction of our army, at the termination of the war, left a great number of officers ill provided for and unemployed, many, and those principally subalterns, went out to aid the common cause of independence in South America: a remonstrance on this account, made by the Spanish ambassador, occasioned the introduction of a bill, by our attorney-general, to prohibit British subjects from enlisting into a foreign service, or equipping vessels of war without license. The first of these objects, he observed, had been in some measure provided for by the statutes of George II. which made it felony to enter into the service of any foreign state: if neutrality, however, was to be observed, it was important that the penalty should be extended to the act of serving unacknowledged as well as acknowledged powers; part of his intention therefore was to amend those statutes, by introducing, after the words 'king, prince, state, potentate,' the words 'colony, or district, which do assume the powers of a government.' Sir James Mackintosh warned the house that, however this motion might be worded, and its real object concealed, the bill ought to be entitled, 'a bill for preventing British subjects from lending their assistance to the South American cause, or enlisting in the South American service.' He asserted, that the statutes of George II., cited as authority on this occasion, were intended merely for the temporary purpose of preventing the formation of jacobite armies organised in France and Spain, against the peace and tranquillity of England; and he concluded by reprobating a measure, which

was virtually an enactment to repress the liberty of the South Americans, and enable Spain to reimpose on them that yoke of tyranny which they were unable to bear; which they had nobly shaken off; and from which, he trusted, they would finally and for ever be enabled to extricate themselves: but lord Castlereagh contended that the proposed bill was necessary to prevent our giving offence to Spain; whom that house was too just and generous to oppress, because she was weak, and her fortunes had declined. Was not, he asked, the proclamation, which had been issued about eighteen months, approved both in England and America, as perfectly just in the principles of neutrality which it declared? Was it not, he also asked, a breach of that proclamation, when not only individuals, whom perhaps it might have been impossible to restrain; not only officers, in small numbers, went out to join the insurrectionary legions; but when there was a regular organisation of troops; when regiments, regularly formed, left the British shores; when ships of war were fitted out in English ports, and transports chartered to carry thither arms and ammunition? In the subsequent stages of the bill, ministers candidly avowed that this measure had been suggested by the stipulations of a treaty made with Spain in 1814, and by the representations which the ministers of Ferdinand VII. had considered themselves entitled by such stipulations to address to the British government: such an admission excited some severe comments on the character of Ferdinand; the bill, however, was carried; but, though rigorous in its provisions, it was by no means rigorously enforced. An act of grace, which was understood to emanate from the regent himself, for reversing the attainder of lord Edward Fitzgerald, was carried without opposition: the attainder itself, as passed by the Irish parliament, was an instance of contemptible servility to the ruling powers by that corrupt assembly; and the preamble of the present bill stated, that his lordship had never been brought to trial; and that the act of attainder did not pass the Irish parliament till some months after his decease; and that these were sufficient reasons for mitigating the severity of a measure decreed in unhappy and unfortunate times.

Mr. Wilberforce was heard this session complaining of the reluctance which two great powers had shown towards all arrangements necessary for carrying into effect the total abolition of the slave-trade: it grieved him to cast this reproach on a great and high-minded people like the French; and he was still more hurt to find that America was not free from blame.

he trusted, however, that all nations would cordially unite in their endeavors to civilise the inhabitants of Africa; and concluded by moving an address entreating the regent to renew his exertions for the attainment of an object of such general interest: the address was agreed to unanimously; and a similar one was voted in the house of lords, on the motion of lord Lansdowne. The sum of £50,000 was granted, on the motion of the chancellor of the exchequer, for the purpose of enabling government to divert the current of emigration from the United States to the Cape of Good Hope, as a colony to which it might be more advantageously directed: it was proposed to pay the expense of the passage, and to supply the emigrant with means of exercising his industry on arriving at the destined spot: a small advance of money was to be made by each settler before his embarkation, to be repaid him in necessaries at the Cape; so that, with the aid of government, he would have the means of subsisting comfortably until he gathered his crops, which, in that climate, were of rapid growth. This session, in which the house of commons had shown very considerable resistance to ministerial dictation, was closed on the thirteenth of July by the regent personally; who in his speech expressed a confident expectation, that the measures which had been adopted for the resumption of cash payments would be productive of the most beneficial consequences: he regretted the necessity of additional taxation; anticipated many permanent advantages from the efforts which had been made to meet our financial difficulties; and in adverting to the seditious spirit now abroad in our manufacturing districts, avowed a firm determination to employ the powers provided by law for its suppression.

Ministers, as we have seen, at the opening of the session, indulged only in joyful anticipations of prosperity, without contemplating the political and moral causes of evil working around them. Though the amount of government expenditure had greatly decreased, the extent of parish relief to the poorer classes indicated no improvement in their condition:⁴ though the drains made by government were first lessened by a cessation or diminution of loans, the effect of this, in a rise of wages

⁴ The amount of government expenditure, in 1813, was £109,054,125, or, allowing for the depreciation of the currency twenty-two and a-half per-cent., £84,863,697; in 1819, it was only £48,438,396; but in 1813, a sum equivalent to about 1,200,000 quarters of wheat was sufficient for the relief of the poor; while, in 1819, a sum equal to more than 2,000,000 quarters was required.

to the same extent, was not immediately felt; it became necessary, that the amount of wealth, which had been annually taken by government in loans, should be left to be employed as capital, in competition with the other existing capital; and that profit should thus be reduced, and wages made to rise; but this operation required time: it happened also, that, in taking off taxes, a course was pursued which gave the least immediate relief to the laboring part of the community; for instead of those taxes being dispensed with which pressed immediately on them, the property tax was repealed; an impost, which came not out of the pockets of laborers; and from the repeal of which, relief would come most circuitously, and at the most distant period: but there are other fixed payments, as well as those made to government, which the British people had to pay; such as annuities of various kinds, sums engaged to be paid by lease for all sorts of houses, warehouses, mills, &c., compositions for tithes, mortgages, and rents of lands: as these were now to be exacted in a currency increased in value by twenty per cent., additional produce to that value would be taken from payers, and given to receivers: in whatever form payment might be made, this would be the effect; every payer would have to part with more goods, by twenty per cent., in order to obtain the money necessary for his payment; and every receiver would, in the money which he received, obtain the power of purchasing and consuming twenty per cent. more of the produce of labor: now as the main body of receivers are of the wealthy and unproductive, and the payers generally of the poorer and productive classes, the former would be gainers, and the latter losers, by this rise of value in the currency: but a restoration of our currency to an undepreciated state was not the only alteration which it underwent at this time; gold was rising, from various causes, in its exchangeable value; and its tendency to flow toward this country was becoming weaker, or rather it began to ebb from it; and if the currency had been intirely of gold at this period, it would have flowed out, until prices had sunk to a much lower level. The existence of paper-money, when that paper was made liable to be paid in gold, did not, however, keep up the quantity of currency materially above what it would have been, if constituted of gold alone; as the paper was reduced to the quantity which the gold would have equalled in the absence of the paper; and as gold became scarce, paper was obliged to be taken in, to preserve it at the same level as the gold: hence, as there was a twofold reduction in the value of the

currency during the progress of the war, first, from a fall in exchangeable value of gold, and afterwards, from an excessive issue of paper; so there was now a twofold rise in the currency; first from a withdrawal of paper to an extent sufficient to remove the depreciation arising from its excessive issue; and afterwards, sufficient to raise its value equal to the rise in the exchangeable value of gold.

At this period, the rise of gold was considered equal to about ten per cent.; when the whole sums of net wealth, paid by the productive classes, would be increased to that extent; or additional wealth to that amount taken from them.⁵ The total net wealth furnished at this time was estimated at £100,000,000; £50,000,000 to individual annuitants, £50,000,000 to the government; and if the rise in the value of gold, which equalled ten per cent., be added to the increase of twenty per cent. in the value of the currency consequent on the removal of depreciation, the additional wealth taken from the people equalled thirty per cent. on the total sum; that is, £100,000,000 would command commodities equal to £130,000,000 when the currency was at its lowest value; while the benefit obtained by laboring classes arose only from a reduction in the rate of profit, consequent on the repeal of loans, and the cessation of the property tax. Nothing but the increase of population, enabling the people to furnish the required wealth with more ease, prevented still more calamitous effects on their condition from the increased burdens imposed upon them: but, on the other hand, the fall in the selling prices of our exports, occasioned by the extension of manufactures at home, while rival establishments were appearing in other countries,—made it necessary that a larger portion of British labor should be engaged in their production than when they sold at higher prices: less labor was consequently left, to produce annually at home all that mass of wealth, which satisfies the demands of the net claimants, and enables the whole community to subsist.

The foregoing statement, to which many other facts might be added, is perhaps sufficient to account for the condition of the laboring classes not improving immediately after the war. In addition to such general causes of discontent, may be added the coercive measures, necessarily, though perhaps in some cases obnoxious, put in force by government; while the house of commons became more regarded as an instrument

⁵ For a certain time, indeed, some of this would be paid by the capitalists; but it would finally be furnished by the laborers.

subservient to ministerial and aristocratical power, than as a faithful representation of the people: in the mean time, demagogues and low traffickers in infidelity and sedition sought subsistence or notoriety in vile publications, by which the passions of the multitude were inflamed, and their resentment pointed against all ranks above them: the rural population, being more thinly scattered, and more passive by habit and education, was not so easily roused; but the manufacturing laborers in the midland and northern districts, as well as in various parts of Scotland, entered into secret combinations, and called together assemblies, in which deliberative inquiries were acutely made, and daringly avowed, on the subject of actual grievances and natural rights.

Among these discontented artisans, a party, who denominated themselves radical reformers, began to acquire much influence, from the sedulity with which they propagated the notion, that such a reform of parliament as would make its members truly representatives of the people, would be the surest method of putting an end to present and future sufferings: the most notorious of these demagogues was Henry Hunt, a man without much political knowlege, sagacity, or eloquence; but daring in the cause which he had adopted, and shrewd in the topics and vocabulary of the mob, with an appearance of honesty well calculated to attach them to his person.

One of the first steps of this radical crew, was an application to the magistrates of Manchester, to convoke a meeting for the alleged purpose of petitioning against the corn bill; and in consequence of their refusal, it was summoned by an anonymous advertisement. Hunt, who had been selected as the hero of the day, was conducted, in a kind of triumphal procession, to the place of meeting, where a strong remonstrance to the prince regent was adopted; but the multitude dispersed without tumult or disorder: this example was followed at Glasgow, Leeds, Stockport, and other manufacturing places; but strong measures of precaution taken by local authorities, had, in most instances, the effect of preserving order and tranquillity: though there was a marked contrast between the peaceable demeanor of the auditors, and the inflammatory character of the language in which they were addressed. On these occasions, the defect in the representation of the people was pronounced to be the grand source of all evils; for which, annual parliaments, universal suffrage, and election by ballot were pointed out as the only remedies: at one meeting, there was a discussion, whether the people had a

right to destroy the Bank of England; and some hints were thrown out respecting the expediency of a division of landed property, and a recurrence to physical force: by some, however, it was contended, that these suggestions, which were attended with no practical results, proceeded from spies; and it is not improbable that the agents of government, whose duty could not legitimately extend beyond the office of observing and reporting the proceedings which took place, might occasionally exceed their instructions: the most novel and censurable feature in the system was the formation of female societies for the promotion of reform; which bodies entered into violent resolutions, and called on the wives and daughters of manufacturers to promote such associations, for the purpose of co-operating with the men, and instilling into their children a deep-rooted hatred of tyrannical governors. At Birmingham, where extensive distress among the working classes had given greater currency to these new doctrines, the radicals hazarded a bolder experiment than any which they had before displayed: this was the election of a member, or, as it was termed a 'legislatorial attorney,' to represent that great and populous town in the house of commons: at a meeting held for this purpose, on the twelfth of July, the managers stated, that the issue of a writ being compulsory, they had not thought it necessary to wait for a mandate; but that, in the exercise of their constitutional rights, and the duty of good subjects, they should proceed to advise the sovereign by their representative. Sir Charles Wolseley, who had previously declared his determination to claim his seat if he should be elected, was put into nomination, and unanimously chosen by an assemblage of 15,000 persons. Ministers and their partisans for a time regarded this proceeding as a matter of jest, instead of seeing in it a practical demonstration, that Birmingham, and some other populous towns, ought to be represented in parliament.

A few days, however, after the reformers had got up this scene, it was resolved, at a meeting in the great unrepresented town of Leeds, that a similar election should take place, as soon as an eligible member could be found: but government at length interfered; the legislatorial attorney of Birmingham was arrested, on account of expressions used at Stockport, in Cheshire; and an itinerant preacher, named Harrison, for a similar offence at the same place, was taken into custody while attending a reform meeting in London: on these charges they were next year convicted, and sentenced to imprisonment.

The Smithfield meeting, at which Harrison was arrested, took place on the twenty-first of July : some degree of alarm was naturally felt by the citizens on such an occasion ; and for the purpose of preventing riot and disorder, extensive and judicious precautions were taken both by the government and the police : Hunt was elected to the chair ; and several resolutions were carried, to the effect, that as the persons at present composing the house of commons had not been fairly chosen, the meeting could not consider themselves bound in equity by any of their enactments, after the following January. When the officers seized on Harrison, a few voices were heard proposing resistance : when Hunt requested the multitude to let him go quietly :—‘ If they apprehend me,’ said he, ‘ I am ready with bail, and will try the question : let me subpœna all here present ; and then, although they may procure three villains to swear away my life, I shall not be afraid, having 50,000 witnesses to contradict them : if only thirty of you should come day by day, the trial will last for three years !’ The remonstrance to the prince regent, which had been carried at a meeting in Palace-yard on the eighth of September last year, was again adopted, and numerous speeches followed ; in the course of which Hunt stated, that the penny subscription, which had been started to promote the cause of reform, and had been expected to create in one year a fund of £256,000, amounted, at the expiration of ten months, only to four pounds, fourteen shillings, and sixpence. This enormous assemblage finally separated without any rioting or tumult.

On the third night following, an atrocious attempt was made at Stockport to assassinate Birch, the deputy constable for that township, by whose exertions both sir Charles Wolseley and Harrison had been apprehended : vigorous measures for the discovery of the offenders were immediately adopted ; and on the thirtieth of July a proclamation was issued against seditious assemblies.

The Manchester reformers, who had announced a meeting to be held on the ninth of August for the election of a representative, as at Birmingham, were informed by the magistrates, that, as the proposed object was unquestionably illegal, they would not be permitted to assemble : in consequence of this determination, the design was relinquished, and notices were issued of a meeting to be held on the sixteenth of August, avowedly for the legal purpose of petitioning in favor of parliamentary reform : an open space in the town, called St. Peter’s field, was selected for the assembly ; and never on any previous occasion

was so great a number of persons known to be present: some hours before the proceedings were to commence, large bodies began to march in from the adjoining towns and villages, forming rows five deep, many of them armed with stout staves, and preserving a kind of military order as well as regularity of step: each company had its own flag and motto; while banners of white silk preceded two clubs of female reformers; the whole numbers collected being estimated at 60,000. A band of special constables, stationed on the ground, disposed themselves so as to form a line of communication from a house where the magistrates were sitting, to the stage or platform erected for Mr. Hunt, the chairman, and the orators who intended to harangue the meeting; but soon after the business had been opened, a body of yeomanry cavalry entered the ground at a rapid pace, and advanced with drawn swords toward the stage; while their commanding officer called out to Hunt, who was then speaking, and told him that he was their prisoner. The chairman, after enjoining the people to be tranquil, and offering to surrender himself to any civil officer who should exhibit his warrant, was taken into custody by a constable, and several other persons were also apprehended: some of the yeomanry then cried out, 'Have at their flags!' on which, the troop began to strike down the banners raised in various parts of the field; and a scene of dreadful confusion arose: numbers were trampled under the feet of men and horses; many persons, even females, were cut by sabres; several were killed; and the maimed and wounded amounted to between three and four hundred: in a short time the ground was cleared of its former occupants, and military patrols were stationed in the principal streets of the town to preserve tranquillity.

Great difference of opinion afterwards prevailed on this subject; and perhaps the Manchester meeting is one of those events, the various details of which will never be accurately cleared up: whether the riot act was actually read or not is a disputed point; the reformers and their friends insisting that it was not, the magistrates and their adherents contending that it was: and certainly, if it was read, the affirmative of the proposition would have been more easily established than its negative: the whole transaction appears not to have extended beyond ten minutes; by which time the field was intirely cleared of the populace, and occupied by different corps of infantry and cavalry. Hunt and his colleagues, after a short examination, were conducted to solitary cells on a charge of high treason: the following day, notices were issued by the

magistrates, declaring the practice of military training, alleged to have been carried on secretly for treasonable purposes, to be illegal : public thanks were by the same authority returned to the officers of the respective corps engaged in the attack ; and on the arrival in London of a despatch from the local authorities, a cabinet council was held, which, on *ex parte* and interested statements, rather precipitately directed official letters of thanks to be forwarded to the magistrates for their prompt, decisive, and efficient measures ; as well as to all the military engaged, for the support and assistance rendered by them to the civil power.

For some days, the town of Manchester and its neighborhood were in a state of constrained tranquillity, although some farther disturbances, in which one or two lives were lost, had taken place. A numerous meeting, at the Crown and Anchor tavern in London, passed a series of resolutions, strongly censuring the conduct of the magistrates, as well as of the military, and returning thanks to Hunt and his colleagues ; as also a resolution for raising a subscription to defray the expense of defending the prisoners : in the same spirit, a meeting was held in Smithfield ; and a violent letter on the subject was addressed to the electors of Westminster by sir Francis Burdett, for the writing of which he was afterwards tried, and convicted as a libeller.

In pursuance of this letter, an immense multitude assembled within the precincts of Palace-yard on the second of September, for the purpose of declaring an opinion on the conduct of the magistrates and yeomanry of Manchester : after speeches, which occupied three hours in the delivery, by sir Francis Burdett, and Mr. Hobhouse, his colleague in the representation of Westminster, several violent resolutions were adopted, declaring the assemblage at Manchester a lawful meeting ; that the outrage then committed was an attempt to destroy by sword the few remaining liberties of Englishmen ; and that this was another lamentable consequence of the want of a real representation. An address to the prince regent, founded on these resolutions, was unanimously agreed to.

The circumstances of this case turned out to be such, that government found it expedient to abandon the threatened trial of Hunt and his associates for high treason ; and those persons were accordingly informed that they would be prosecuted for a conspiracy only, which was a bailable offence ; but Hunt refused to give bail, even, as he said, to the amount of a single farthing : nevertheless he was liberated by some of his friends ;

and his return from Lancaster to Manchester had the appearance of a triumphal procession; for he was attended by thousands on horse, on foot, and in carriages, who hailed him with shouts of applause, as the assertor of British freedom.

True bills were found by the Lancashire grand jury against Hunt, Johnson, Moorhouse, and the other prisoners indicted with them; all of whom availed themselves of their privilege of traversing till the spring assizes of 1820; and instead of Lancaster, the trial took place at York: after ten days' duration, it closed on the tenth of April, when the jury declared Hunt, Johnson, Knight, Healy, and Bamford, guilty of collecting an assembly with unlawful banners, for the purpose of moving and inciting the liege subjects of our sovereign lord the king unto contempt and hatred of the government and constitution of this realm, as by law established, and of attending at the same: in the ensuing term they received sentence; Hunt to be imprisoned in the jail of Ilchester two years and a half, and then to find securities for his good behaviour during five years; Johnson, Bamford, and Healy to be imprisoned one year in Lincoln castle, and also to find sureties.

The reformers, notwithstanding the tragical result of their meeting, still ventured to assemble as before at Leeds, Glasgow, and other places: the conduct of the Manchester magistrates and yeomanry became a prominent theme with their orators; ensigns of mourning were exhibited; horrible details were given of the barbarous acts alleged to have been committed; while the sufferers of the sixteenth of August were eulogised as martyrs, and classed with Russell, Hampden, Sidney, or other illustrious names of ancient times: rarely, however, where the local authorities abstained from interposition, did any breach of the peace ensue; but at Paisley, where the flags of the radicals were seized by the magistrates on their return from the meeting, some riots occurred, which fortunately were quelled without bloodshed.

The regular opposition, or whig party, throughout the kingdom, seized with avidity on the solemn approval which had been given by government, so hastily, to an illegal act of power; and the various meetings convened on this occasion were numerous, and in some instances very respectably, attended: a large and dangerous assemblage of the county of York was sanctioned by the presence of earl Fitzwilliam, lord-lieutenant of the west riding, as well as many other whig noblemen and gentlemen, who, having delivered their sentiments in very strong language, adopted a petition to the regent, calling loudly

for inquiry; in consequence of which proceedings, the noble earl was dismissed from his high office, since ministers chose rather to be abused by their enemies than despised by their friends. Meetings, however, were held in other places, and petitions drawn up, some calling only for investigation, and others adding strong censure on the administration: the corporation of London, having presented a very energetic address, were severely rebuked by the regent, as prejudging the matter, without having had an opportunity of understanding it; in allusion to which, earl Grey subsequently in the house of peers taxed ministers with having placed in his royal highness's hands 'an impertinent and flippant answer,' rebuking the city for prejudging the case, after they themselves had shamefully prejudged it by transmitting thanks so precipitately to the magistrates.

To counteract these meetings, loyal addresses, and offers to raise yeomanry corps, were zealously promoted by the friends of administration; whilst a large veteran battalion, under the auspices of lord Sidmouth, was formed out of the Chelsea pensioners. Parties at this time became bitterly exasperated against each other; and as persons of property chiefly adhered to the ministerial side of the question, the lower orders began to entertain against their superiors that deeply-seated indignation which contributed much to the reform of our institutions. 'If the laws were really violated,' said the regent, 'by those whose duty it was to assist in putting them into execution, the tribunals of the country were open to afford redress:'⁶ at Lancaster, however, a grand jury threw out every bill which had been preferred against individuals by the sufferers on the sixteenth of August; whilst, at Manchester, the authorities showed a determination to carry matters with a high hand: no depositions against the yeomanry, or police officers, by those whom they had injured, were received; and the coroner directed verdicts to be returned, on which no judicial proceedings could be founded.

Amid the general ferment produced by these commotions, the meeting of parliament was impatiently expected by all parties: it assembled on the twenty-third of November; when the regent, in his opening speech, expressed much regret at the necessity for calling members together so early. After dilating on the seditious spirit and insurrectionary acts of the manufacturing classes, he promised to lay before them all the infor-

⁶ Answer to city address.

mation requisite to direct them in their deliberations; and pressed on their attention the enactment of such regulations as might tend to suppress the evil. An amendment to the address was moved in the house of lords by earl Grey; in which, while the necessity of checking practices dangerous to the constitution was fully admitted, a strong opinion was expressed of the expediency of conciliation, and of inquiry into the transactions at Manchester, in order to allay feelings to which they had given birth, and to satisfy the people that the lives of his majesty's subjects could not be sacrificed with impunity.

Lord Sidmouth, feeling himself called on officially to reply, declared, that never before had so much exaggeration, misrepresentation, and falsehood gone forth concerning any public event: the meeting, he would boldly assert, was both illegal and treasonable; the magistrates would have acted not only unwisely, but basely and unjustly, had they done otherwise than they did; the letter of approbation was sanctioned by a cabinet council; and he, for his part, did not shrink from any share of its responsibility: the danger with which we were threatened was generally admitted; and its magnitude should induce their lordships to unite in vigorous measures to avert it: the most alarming feature in that danger was the conduct of some persons, who encouraged the disaffected, by standing between the government assailed and the party assailing it. Lord Eldon also declared, that no such inquiry as that now demanded could be granted consistently with the spirit of our law. Considering that proceedings were in progress before the legal tribunals, he was reluctant to deliver an opinion; but when he read in his law-books that numbers constituted force, force terror, and terror illegality, he felt that no man could deny the Manchester meeting to have been an illegal one: he defended the government, and maintained that if the magistrates had erred at all, it was on the side of remissness rather than undue rigor. The amendment was negatived by 159 votes against 134.

In the house of commons, an amendment was moved by Mr. Tierney, who drew a melancholy picture of the country, affirming that the measures of ministers had brought it to the brink of despair: he also stated, that the cause of parliamentary reform had of late years been working its way among the people; the diffusion of education, sanctioned by parliament itself, had compelled the house to submit to all criticisms on its proceedings, which men felt justified by facts in making; and if government thought, that by passing new laws, raising

new troops, or encouraging loyal addresses, they could put down the awakened spirit of the people, they would find themselves grievously mistaken: he then adverted to the Manchester massacre, and urged very strenuously the necessity of inquiry; concluding by some very severe remarks on the dismissal of earl Fitzwilliam. Lord Castlereagh, in reply, declined following the honorable member through his remarks on the state of the country; because the only definite proposition offered, was one for inquiry into the transactions at Manchester; respecting which he should next day lay a mass of information before the house, and explain the measures contemplated by government: his lordship justified the magistrates, and supported the address; which, like that in the lords, was carried by a large majority.

Next day, the promised documents respecting the state of popular feeling were produced: they consisted partly in the correspondence of official persons with the home secretary, and partly in communications made by individuals whose names were suppressed. Letters from the Manchester magistrates, which had been received previously to the sixteenth of August, expressed apprehensions that a formidable insurrection was in contemplation; while they bore testimony to the alarming distress of the manufacturing classes; and assigned hunger as a natural inducement with the poor to adopt pernicious doctrines, as projects for the amelioration of their sufferings. It was stated in numerous depositions, that the practice of secret training prevailed to a great extent among the reformers, but merely with a view of enabling themselves to march in the semblance of military array to their meetings; sticks being the only weapons which had been employed. A communication from lord Fitzwilliam on the state of the west riding of Yorkshire, represented that the last reform meeting on Hunslet-moor had been less numerously attended than previously; and he intimated that the rage for such assemblies might be safely left to die away of itself. Sir John Byng, military commander of the district, stated, that simultaneous meetings were to have been held at many neighboring towns, but the plan had been frustrated by the disunion of the leaders. The distress and discontent reigning in this quarter, where the manufacture of pistols, pikes, and other weapons was reported to be going on very extensively, formed the subject of some communications; and similar representations from the south-west of Scotland, where employment and wages had fallen off still more deplorably, were afforded by others. The grand jury of

Cheshire also expressed the alarm which was felt for life and property by the loyal part of his majesty's subjects.

This body of evidence having been submitted to the two houses, ministers proceeded to open their system of defensive measures ; and as a preliminary step, the lord chancellor introduced a bill, which he said he had long contemplated. It had been usual with the courts to allow defendants, in cases of information or indictment, to *imparle* or traverse ; but as great inconvenience had arisen from this practice, which sometimes delayed trials to a very remote period, and as the ends of justice might thus be defeated, this bill would take away from a defendant the right of traversing ; allowing the court, however, to postpone the trial, on his showing sufficient reason for delay. Earl Grey at once entered his protest against all the measures which appeared to be in preparation, as calculated to bring misery, if not ruin on the country : at the second reading, earl Grosvenor contended, that while the attorney-general was allowed to hold informations over the heads of defendants for an indefinite time, to abolish the right of traverse was greatly enhancing the grievance : lord Erskine also opposed the bill, as depriving the people of a great and important privilege ; while the earl of Liverpool contended, that if their lordships did not pass it, they had better at once declare that every description of sedition and blasphemy should enjoy complete toleration. Lord Holland recommended the equity of legislating on both sides of the question, so as to prevent the delays which occurred in prosecutions on *ex officio* informations, as well as in those of indictment ; and, in compliance with this suggestion, the lord chancellor, at the third reading, proposed an additional clause, compelling the attorney-general to bring a defendant to trial within a year, or to enter a *noli prosequi*. The bill, thus amended, passed both houses without farther opposition.

The additional measures for the restriction of public liberty, proposed by lord Sidmouth in the upper, and lord Castlereagh in the lower house, were the following :—‘ An act to render the publication of a blasphemous or seditious libel punishable, on a second conviction, at the discretion of the court, by fine, imprisonment, banishment, or transportation ; to give power, in cases of a second conviction, to seize the copies of any libel in possession of the publisher ; a stamp duty, equal to that paid by newspapers, on all publications containing less than a given number of sheets ; with an obligation on all publishers of such pieces to enter into recognizances for the payment of such penalties as might in future be incurred by them.’ The

press being thus restrained, seditious meetings were to be controlled by the following provisions:—‘That a requisition for holding any meeting except those regularly called by a sheriff, boroughreeve, or other magistrate, should be signed by seven householders; and that it should be illegal for any persons, not being inhabitants of the place in which such meeting was held, to attend it; also, that magistrates should be empowered, within certain limitations, to appoint the time and place of meeting.’ To repel any danger which might arise from the mustering of an illegal force, it was proposed to prohibit military training, except under the authority of a magistrate or lieutenant of a county; and in the disturbed districts, to give to magistrates a power of seizing any arms believed to be collected for unlawful purposes, and also to apprehend and detain persons so carrying arms. The only one of these bills which passed without opposition, was that for the prevention of secret military training: the bill for the seizure of arms, which, under certain circumstances, and in particular districts, authorised search in private dwellings by day or night, was vehemently resisted both in the upper and lower house; whilst a clause in the act concerning blasphemous and seditious libels, which visited a second conviction by the punishment of transportation, though it passed the lords, was withdrawn when it came to the commons: but the penalty of banishment previously unknown to the English law, was now introduced into it: the seditious meeting bill in its progress, was subjected to a modification, by which all meetings held in a room or building were exempted from its operation; several alterations also were admitted into that which subjected small publications to the newspaper stamp duty. Such were the celebrated ‘six acts,’ which ultimately passed, and which ministers deemed necessary to coerce the turbulence of an irritated people: despotic and dangerous as their spirit seemed to be, probably nothing less would have been effectual; and after all, what were they? acts of a free legislature, agreed to by a majority of the people’s representatives; provisions, emanating from the most glorious constitution on earth, to preserve that very constitution for posterity! No counteracting violence was here meditated; no naked sword was placed in the hands of a chief magistrate, ordered to prevent the republic from receiving injury by imbruing his weapon in the blood of its citizens; but a few strict and severe enactments were made, to guard, as it were, the majesty of the law; while the reign of that law was still left free and undisturbed as ever.

On the following evening, the marquis of Lansdowne moved for a select committee to inquire into the state of the nation, especially of the disturbed districts, where radicalism, as it was called, prevailed in proportion to existing distress. That distress, he thought, arose from the long war, which gave us the carrying trade of the world ; creating a fixed capital, which still existed, and filled the markets, while no vent could be found for their produce : it was also increased by our poor laws, paper currency, and spirit of excessive speculation : adverting to expedients which had been proposed for its alleviation, such as temporary loans to encourage labor, he thought there were two other points of a more extended nature, well worthy of attention ; the one was to take off duties from articles such as tea, the use of which had considerably decreased in various districts, and which were much affected by the smuggling trade ; the other was the establishment of favorable commercial treaties, which government had not yet succeeded in accomplishing : he alluded particularly to the timber trade with Norway, which had been neglected, in order to encourage the growth of very inferior wood in Canada ; so that Norway was prevented from taking many of our articles of commerce. The marquis Wellesley deprecated all such inquiries, until the passing of the bills necessary to curb that seditious spirit which was so dangerous to our institutions : lord Erskine however thought the existing laws were wholly sufficient for this purpose, and that the country was by no means in so alarming a condition as at the time of the state trials in 1794 : he ridiculed the evidence which appeared in the papers lately laid before parliament, with a view to prove a treasonable or seditious meeting at Manchester ; and contended that there was nothing illegal in marching to a place of public concourse. Lord Grenville could not be induced to consider the designs of the reformers as originating in distress, which, he hoped, was only temporary : such distress gave facilities to factious men, which they would not otherwise possess ; but the root of the evil lay much deeper : the promoters of the new system here, taking the French revolution as their model, had deluged the country with blasphemous publications ; and he considered the conduct of the magistrates at Manchester as not only free from blame, but worthy of great applause. The motion was negatived by a large majority.

Unfavorable as the times appeared to be for the discussion of parliamentary reform, lord John Russell was not deterred from calling the attention of the house of commons to our

unrepresented towns ; many of which had risen to vast importance, while certain boroughs had sunk into decay, and become unfit to enjoy the privilege of sending representatives to the great council of the nation. He brought forward examples from historical documents, to show that the principle of change had often been acknowledged ; the right of suffrage having been withdrawn from and conferred on various places. After a full explanation of his views, he proposed several resolutions in accordance with them, the last being for the disfranchisement of Grampound, the corruption of which borough had been already proved to the house : at the suggestion, however, of lord Castlereagh, who appeared willing to concur in the objects of the motion to a certain degree, lord John now withdrew it, but after a few days brought in a bill for the disfranchisement of Grampound, and the transfer of its elective privileges to some populous town.

Considerable excitement arose in the political circles from the fulfilment of a convention concluded between Great Britain and Turkey ; by which the fortress of Parga, which remained after the war under British protection, was ceded nominally to the latter power, but, in fact, to its bitter and deceitful enemy, Ali Pasha ; who was at this very time, and had long been considered a rebel against the Porte. The Parghiotes were the last of the christians in Epirus who had successfully resisted his tyranny : in 1807, after the treaty of Tilsit had given the Ionian isles to Napoleon, they had solicited and obtained a French garrison from Corfu ; and in 1814, they had taken the precaution of early placing themselves under British protection. During the command of general Campbell, they enjoyed security, and began to look forward with confidence to its continuance ; but under the despotic rule of sir T. Maitland, who, after much intriguing with Ali Pasha, took a different view of the question, they were ordered either to submit to the Albanian despot, or to quit their country for ever : finding their fate inevitable, and knowing the vindictive nature of their foe, they chose the latter alternative, when an estimate was made of their possessions, amounting, on a moderate calculation, to £500,000 ; but the compensation which sir Thomas Maitland chose to accept in their name, and in opposition to their remonstrances, was less than one-third of that sum : when this circumstance, and the harshness with which all the decrees against a brave but unfortunate people, are taken into consideration, it cannot be matter of surprise that the whole continent rang with exclamations against the policy of our

government. When it was signified to the miserable Parghiotes that the fated day of their expulsion was arrived, and that numerous forces were near the frontier, ready to enter their territory; notice was given to the officer conducting the embarkation, that if a single Turk should pass the borders before all had a fair opportunity of quitting their country, they would put to death their wives and children, and defend themselves against any force, British or Turkish, to the last extremity. This was no idle menace; for the history of modern Greece affords numerous instances of such self-devotion; and the Parghiotes knew too well with what an insatiable thirst of blood the Albanian tiger was tormented: information of their determination was sent to the lord high commissioner; and he instantly despatched some British officers to expostulate with the people, who were discovered digging up the bones of their ancestors, and burning or burying them in secret places, to prevent their profanation by the Turks: still it was declared that the meditated sacrifice would be perpetrated, unless the advance of the Albanians, who had already arrived close to the frontier-line, could be stopped; and means were then found to effect this object. In the mean time, the Glasgow frigate arrived: and the embarkation commenced, after the whole people had solemnly knelt down to kiss, for the last time, the land which gave them birth, and watered it with their tears: some of them carried away a handful of the soil, to be a solace in misfortune, or a memorial of wrongs endured, which might stimulate their children to the recovery of their country; others took, for the same purpose, a small portion of those sacred ashes which had been once animated by the spirits of their forefathers. When the bands of Ali Pasha reached the walls, all was solitude and silence: the city, as it has been observed, received its infidel garrison as Babylon or Palmyra salutes the traveller in the desert: nothing breathed, nothing moved; the houses were desolate; the nation was extinct; the bones of the dead were almost consumed to ashes; while the only sign that living creatures had been there, was the smoke slowly ascending from the funeral piles.⁷

The emperor of Russia, this year, prevailed on many of his nobility to emancipate their vassals: he also ordered his soldiers to be quartered on the peasantry, and directed them to instruct each other in their respective avocations. With so much policy had the Prussian monarch conducted himself in his

⁷ The reader is referred, for a minute, circumstantial, and, it is hoped, impartial detail of this lamentable transaction, to the author's travels in Sicily, Greece, and Albania, vol. ii.

alliances and treaties, that he obtained a large addition to the number of his subjects: much discontent, however, was excited among the most intelligent part of the Prussian population, from the unwillingness shown by the sovereign to grant the constitution which he had promised; and many were banished or imprisoned for boldly insisting on their civil rights. The Austrian government was this year occupied in domestic arrangements, and in promoting a pacific policy, chiefly with a view to consolidate its dominions and influence in Italy. The states of Germany still continued without their constitutions, though some minor points were conceded to the people. The king of Hanover abolished torture, and convoked a species of parliament; but no person was to be admitted to hear its debates. In Spain, the despotism of the priesthood became intolerable, and as Ferdinand grew more and more bloodthirsty, he executed above fifty officers implicated with the patriotic Lacy in the charge of insurrection: a new ministry was appointed, and the members of the old one sent into exile: on his second marriage, which took place this year, an amnesty was published; but it contained so many exceptions, that, under the mask of moderation, it aggravated the outrageous conduct of the monarch. In the kingdom of the Netherlands attempts were made to curb the liberty of the press, which exposed to the world much discordant feeling between the two territorial branches of the realm.

At the beginning of this year, a new and popular ministry had been appointed in France, with M. de Cazes at its head, supported by the marshals of Napoleon's creation; yet the ultra-royalists contrived to carry a motion in the house of peers, tending to destroy the freedom of elections: in the chamber of deputies, however, motions of a similar nature were rejected; and to check such attempts in the other house, the king added fifty new names to the peerage: disturbances, supposed to be instigated by ultra-royalists, broke out in various parts of the kingdom.

The greatest interest, however, attached itself to the affairs of the new world: the consolidated republics of Buenos Ayres and Chili were engaged in completing their internal organisation, and in preparing to invade Peru, where the prejudices of education, the errors of ignorance, and the superstitions of priestcraft still attached a strong party to the interests of Old Spain. Lord Cochrane was appointed commander of the Chilian navy; and, as might be expected from the energy of his character, acquired an undisturbed dominion over the South American ocean.

In the provinces bordering on the Caribbean seas, the republican cause obtained more decisive success : Bolivar, the Washington of South America, having marched his troops from the Orinoko, through wildernesses and over mountains, surprised the armies of the royalists in the rich provinces of New Granada, whose capital Santa Fé Bogotá, hoisted the standard of liberty, proclaiming the union of New Granada with Venezuela, under the general name of Columbia. A republican constitution of these vast territories was afterwards promulgated, and an assembly of representatives opened by a speech from Bolivar, the president and liberator ; which, as a manual of political science, may vie with the celebrated document that closed the political career of Washington. Morillo and the armies from Old Spain, acted, during the latter part of the year, intirely on the defensive : the reinforcements, which had been collected at Cadiz, were put into vessels at that port, but were soon afterwards disembarked on account of a spirit of disaffection which appeared among them ; so that the *beloved* Ferdinand had now a certain prospect before him of losing his transatlantic dominions.

Among the few domestic events of this year, the most memorable one is the birth of that princess who now rules over the affectionate and loyal people of Great Britain, on the twenty-fourth of May. The metropolis acquired a considerable addition of ornament and convenience from the opening of the Burlington Arcade, and the noble iron-bridge thrown over the Thames, to form a new communication between the city and the borough of Southwark : in this case, however, as in that of the magnificent bridge of Waterloo, the speculation, which was intirely one of private individuals, turned out a complete failure :⁸ in both instances, it was discovered, that a large majority of the people preferred the indirect expense arising from the loss of an hour's time, and the waste of shoe-leather, to the direct and positive tax of one penny ; a fact, from which they whose business it is to tax the nation may take a useful lesson. In this year, Mr. Telford began the construction of that magnificent suspension-bridge, which hangs over Menai Strait ; and Mr. Perkins, of Philadelphia, introduced into this country a mode of engraving on softened steel, which, when hardened, will multiply impressions to an almost indefinite extent.

⁸ The £100 shares of the latter, and the £50 shares of the former, were soon to be purchased at the price of about £2 each.

CHAPTER LX.

GEORGE IV.—1820.

Death of the duke of Kent and of George III.—Ascension of George IV.—Declaration, &c.—His alarming illness—Message respecting the dissolution of parliament, &c.—Mr. Hume's embarrassing question respecting the queen—The chancellor's speech—Thistlewood's conspiracy—Trial and execution of the conspirators—Popular discontent—Meetings at Huddersfield, Glasgow, &c.—Elections—Meeting of parliament, &c.—Motion respecting the borough of Grampound—Bills for amending our criminal code—Failure of Mr. Brougham's education bill—Motion for a committee on the corn laws carried—Motion for a committee respecting free trade—Civil list and financial statement—Affairs of the queen—Her arrival in England—Proceedings against her in parliament, &c.—Her loss of popularity—Death of the duchess of York—Return of captain Parry from the north seas—Revolutions, &c. in foreign states.

THE protracted existence of the venerable monarch who had so long swayed the British sceptre was now drawing to a close : in November his health underwent a considerable change ; and though for a time alarming symptoms were removed, yet a general decay of the constitution ensued, which portended dissolution at no distant period. On the twenty-first of January died, after a short illness, the duke of Kent ; leaving behind him the character of a charitable, humane prince, and an infant daughter, Alexandrina Victoria, who soon became presumptive heiress to the British throne. Eight days had scarcely elapsed before his venerable father expired, without a struggle, on the twenty-ninth of January, in the eighty-second year of his age, and the sixtieth of his reign : happily for him, he was not, as sometimes happens to those who labor under similar disorders, visited by a ray of returning reason, which would only have served to make him conscious of the desolation of his last moments : yet, though the latter part of his life had been a blank, his people, over whom he so long swayed a sceptre unstained by cruelty or crime, never lost sight of him : their interest had not been wearied by his long

seclusion, nor had their love expired in the flood of victories that distinguished the regency: the influence of his character, in preserving this nation from the contagion of French principles, the steady progress which civil and religious liberty had made under his auspices, the desire which he had ever shown to improve the moral and intellectual condition of his people, still lived in their memory, and taught them to feel, when he descended into the grave, that a benefactor and a father had departed.

The acquisition of the crown by George IV. effected nothing more than a change in the title under which he had long governed the empire. The glories of his regency had eclipsed the splendor of preceding reigns; and his elevation, at an epoch of great national distress, seemed to forebode only a melancholy contrast between the foreign triumphs of his early government and the domestic troubles by which they were soon succeeded: besides, to himself individually the assumption of this new dignity was followed by perplexities of no common magnitude: the results of an ill-judged marriage first alienated from him the affection of his people, who, with natural sympathy for an injured and helpless female, never forgave his original neglect and subsequent hostility toward his consort; but the period of his accession to the throne, when he was induced to extend the limits of that hostility, gave her an opportunity of retaliation, which she did not fail to exercise; and it was left to him to discover—*furens quid fœmina possit*.

The first public act of the new sovereign was to summon a council, at which the credentials of office, having been surrendered by the officers of the crown, were immediately restored to their former possessors; and all the privy-councillors in attendance being sworn members of the new board, took their places accordingly: his majesty then made a declaration, in which, after having feelingly alluded to the demise of his father, and his own long exercise of the royal prerogative, he observed, ‘that nothing but the support which he had received from parliament and the country, in times most eventful, and circumstances most arduous, could inspire him with that confidence which his present situation demanded: he trusted, that experience of the past might satisfy all classes of his people that it would ever be his anxious endeavor to promote their prosperity and happiness, as well as to maintain unimpaired the religion, laws, and liberties of the kingdom.’

At the humble request of the council, this declaration was made public; and on Monday, the thirty-first, the king was

proclaimed, with the usual forms, under the portico of the palace, and afterwards at Charing-cross, Temple-bar, and other stations: on the same day, also, the members of parliament were sworn in, when they immediately adjourned to the seventeenth of February: during this recess, however, distressing reports arose concerning his majesty's health, which had suffered, not only from a rapid succession of domestic afflictions, but from personal exposure to inclement weather at his proclamation, which took place before he had completely recovered from a fit of the gout. A severe inflammation of the chest, the same disease which had lately proved fatal to his brother, created alarm among his medical attendants; but the melancholy foreboding, which originated from this seeming fatality, was happily not realised: his majesty was declared out of danger after little more than a week; but a considerable time elapsed before his health was re-established; so that, when the obsequies of his royal father were celebrated, on the sixteenth of February, at Windsor, amidst a concourse of the great and noble of the land, the highest of them was not present; but the duke of York sustained the character of chief mourner.

According to the principles of our constitution, the demise of the crown is followed by a dissolution of parliament within the next six months: when the two houses therefore assembled, a royal message announced an immediate design of calling a new parliament, and invited them to concur in the necessary arrangements for carrying on the public service during the interval. Loyal addresses, suitable to the occasion, were unanimously voted; and next day ministers obtained a pledge, that the desired measures for the wants of government should be adopted: when the requisite votes of money, however, were proposed in the commons, Mr. Hume took occasion to introduce a very embarrassing subject to their notice: by his majesty's command, in the necessary alteration of the form of prayer for the royal family, the name of her, who was legally become queen-consort, had been omitted; and the honorable member, having taunted ministers with their care to avoid allusion to her case, now desired to know what provision, out of the grant on the civil list, was intended for her support: as princess of Wales, her former allowance had of course ceased on the late king's demise; and he asked, if she, as queen of Great Britain, was to be left to wander in beggary through foreign lands; or whether parliament would make a suitable provision for the maintenance of her dignified station. Lord Castlereagh endeavored to evade this delicate question, and

elude an acknowledgement of the queen's title, by assuring the house, that the exalted personage under consideration should suffer no pecuniary difficulties: but Mr. Tierney, in reply, by commenting on the omission of her majesty's name from the Liturgy, on the rumours in circulation regarding her, and on the report of a commission sent abroad to collect evidence against her character, strove to force ministers into a direct consideration of the question; concluding by a declaration, that he would not consent to vote one shilling of the public money until they should either afford some explanation of the charges against her majesty, or pronounce her title in that house.

This speech was not more embarrassing to administration than to the queen's friends; especially to Mr. Brougham, her legal adviser: accordingly he endeavored to waive the subject intirely; refusing to admit that her title and right as queen-consort stood in need of any recognition by parliament; seeing nothing to prevent an advance of money to her majesty from the civil list, though her name should not be introduced; and deprecating any allusion to charges of which he knew nothing, but which, if they existed, the house might suppose, from her majesty's previous readiness to meet accusation, that she would not be slow to repel: after renewed attempts therefore by Mr. Tierney and others to provoke farther discussion, the vote was suffered to pass without a division; and when ministers had obtained the requisite authority for continuing the public payments, parliament was dissolved by commission on the twenty-eighth of February. The lord chancellor, in his speech on this occasion, after alluding to his majesty's disappointment in being prevented by indisposition from meeting them personally, for the purpose of expressing his sense of their important services, referred, in vindication of their late enactments, to a flagrant and sanguinary conspiracy which had just been detected, and which was sufficient to open the eyes of the most incredulous to the present dangers of the country.

The conspiracy thus glanced at was one of the most desperate that could have been conceived by bad men for the worst of purposes; its object being to overturn the government, and involve our national affairs in irremediable confusion, by an assassination of all the cabinet ministers. The chief leader in this diabolical plot was the notorious Arthur Thistlewood, who had once served as a subaltern officer in the West Indies; and, after imbibing republican principles in America, had confirmed them by a residence in France during the worst era of the revo-

lution: as an accomplice of the elder Watson, he had been tried with that demagogue; and on his acquittal, he sent a challenge to lord Sidmouth; for which offence he had been sentenced to a fine and imprisonment: when liberated, he seems to have cherished a deep-seated thirst of revenge, and to have devoted his whole time to the accomplishment of that purpose; associating with the most depraved among the lowest classes, and gathering round him a number of individuals as desperate and reckless as himself. Of his immediate accomplices, the principal were Ings, a butcher; Davison, a creole; Brunt and Tidd, shoe-makers: these, with a number of other desperadoes, determined, after a series of meetings, that the distress under which they were laboring was no longer to be endured, and that delay was useless: accordingly they fixed on Wednesday, the twenty-third of February, for the explosion of their design; and on the preceding Sunday made the following arrangements:—forty or fifty of the gang were to devote themselves to the task of assassinating his majesty's ministers, under a pledge of forfeiting their own lives in case of failure through want of address or resolution; while other detachments were simultaneously to seize on the field-pieces at the Artillery-ground, and at the London Light-horse Station in Gray's Inn-lane: possessed of these, they were to occupy the Mansion-house, as the palace of the provisional government: the bank was to be attacked; and the metropolis to be fired at several points. Similar meetings were held on Monday and Thursday; on which latter day, an accomplice, named Edwards, assured Thistlewood, that a cabinet dinner would be given on the morrow, at lord Harrowby's house in Grosvenor-square; and all doubts on the subject being removed by the announcement of this entertainment in the public papers, the chief conspirator exultingly observed,—‘As there has not been a dinner for a great length of time, there will no doubt be fourteen or sixteen present; and it will be a rare haul to despatch them altogether.’ Pursuant to the plan of operations, it was agreed, that a single conspirator should go with a note addressed to lord Harrowby; when, the outer door being opened, others should rush in: one party should then proceed to seize and bind the domestics, while another effected an entrance into the room containing the ministers, and perpetrated the horrid massacre; an injunction having been laid on these murderers, that they should bring away the heads of lords Castlereagh and Sidmouth as trophies of their success. From lord Harrowby's mansion, a few of the number were to repair instantly to the barracks in King-street,

Portman-square, where, after firing the straw dépôt, they were to co-operate with the rest in executing the other parts of the scheme already detailed : in the mean time, strict watch was kept on the mansion in Grosvenor-square, in order to ascertain whether any of the police or military entered it, or were concealed in its vicinity : the whole day was consumed in preparations ; arms and ammunition were provided, and proclamations written, ready to be affixed to those edifices which were devoted to the flames. During this awful period, the infatuated wretches crept toward their place of rendezvous ; and by six o'clock all had assembled within a stable situated in an obscure street, called Cato-street, near the Edgeware-road : this building, which they had lately hired, comprised two upper rooms, with an ascent by a ladder ; and in the largest of these, having previously placed a sentinel below, the conspirators were seen, by the glimmering light of one or two small candles, adjusting their accoutrements, and exulting in the speedy prospect of a bloody revenge.

Among the assassins was a pretended colleague, but in reality a spy ; the above-named Edwards, who had for some time been in the pay of government, and had given regular intelligence to his employers of all matters connected with this plot. Every precaution, therefore, was adopted by ministers to lull suspicion : the apparent preparations for lord Harrowby's banquet were continued till eight o'clock in the evening ; so that the conspirators might be detected with arms in their hands : to effect this, a party of police, under the direction of Mr. Birnie, the magistrate, proceeded to the place of rendezvous, where it was intended that a detachment of the Coldstream guards should be ready to support them. About eight o'clock, the constables arrived, before the military ; when, having entered the building, and ascended the ladder, they surprised the gang, on the very point of starting to execute their detestable purpose : they were all ordered to surrender ; and Smithers, an active police officer, rushing forward to secure the ringleader, was pierced to the heart by his sword, and fell : the lights were then extinguished, and the conflict became general ; while some of the gang dashed down the ladder, as the officers grappled with them ; and others forced their way out of a window in the back of the loft. At this juncture, captain Frederic Fitzclarence, with a detachment of thirty guards, came up, and secured one of the gang in the act of escaping, who presented a pistol ; but its aim was averted by serjeant Legge, whom it wounded in the discharge : the captain

then ordered his men to follow him into the stable; but his entrance was opposed by a man of color, who aimed a blow at him with a cutlass, which one of the soldiers warded off by his musket: this ruffian also was secured; when the whole party entered the stable, and mounted the loft, where five more conspirators were captured: but darkness so favoured the flight of these wretches, that nine only were taken. Thistlewood effected his escape that night; but, in consequence of a reward of £1000 being offered for his apprehension, he was seized next morning in bed; and some others were apprehended during the two following days: all these prisoners were committed to the Tower.

On the twenty-seventh of March, true bills, on a charge of high treason, were returned against eleven of the conspirators: on the seventeenth of the next month, Thistlewood was arraigned, and, after a trial of three days, condemned, chiefly on the testimony of Adams, one of the party who was allowed to turn king's evidence: Ings, Tidd, Brunt, and Davison also were severally tried and convicted: the other six, being permitted to withdraw their original plea, now confessed their guilt; when five were sentenced to transportation for life; and the sixth, who appeared to have been ignorant of the purpose of the meeting in Cato-street, received a free pardon. The throng of spectators at the execution of the first five criminals was immense; and no little disgust was excited by the horrid spectacle of their mangled and decapitated remains: the time occupied in this business of hanging and mutilation was near an hour and a quarter; during which period, regiments of cavalry lined the adjacent streets; strong bodies of the military being disposed in various parts of the metropolis, as they had been during the trial. It is melancholy to relate that the man of color was the only one of these criminals who manifested any compunction, or religious penitence for his crimes: Thistlewood and the other three died with great hardihood, glorying in their design, regretting only its failure, and declaring themselves martyrs to the prostituted name of liberty: so odious indeed to the multitude was that melancholy transaction, denominated the 'Manchester massacre,' which at the bar they professed it was their intention to avenge, that many who witnessed the punishment could not refrain from indulging in strong expressions of sympathy for the criminals.

This was a dreadful but an isolated crime; nor was there any reason for connecting it with the political commotions of the preceding year, and casting such a stigma on the national

character ; though, no doubt, the general feeling of discontent, now prevalent, was the foundation on which the conspirators expected ultimate success : this discontent, with which the manufacturing districts of the north had been long agitated, broke out during the spring into several overt acts of rebellion, so as to give alarming proofs of the extension of popular frenzy. In the west riding of Yorkshire, midnight training, the collection of fire-arms, and the manufacture of pikes, had continued through the winter ; but when the appointed time for a general insurrection arrived, two or three hundred malcontents only had assembled in arms near Huddersfield ; and these fled in consternation at the rumored approach of a detachment of cavalry, leaving behind them a green standard and a number of pikes.

In Scotland, the efforts of the disaffected were more alarming : at Glasgow, numbers of artisans, who were desirous of pursuing their avocations apart from the noisy turmoil of political convulsions, had been so repeatedly menaced by the favorers of riot and confusion, that they saw no hope of persevering in a peaceable line of conduct, without compromising the safety of themselves and their families : this panic was still farther increased on Sunday, the second of April, by a treasonable proclamation posted on the city walls, and supposed to emanate from 'the committee for the formation of a provisional government,' recommending the master manufacturers to suspend employment till order should be restored by the organisation alluded to : it farther enjoined all parties to desist from business, and denounced as traitors any who should attempt to resist the projected amelioration of the state. In consequence of this inflammatory placard, the weavers and colliers of Glasgow and Paisley declined to work on Monday ; when the example spread through various other branches of trade : several cotton mills, which commenced their usual business, were obliged to desist by threatening visits ; and the streets were crowded with loitering artisans, all in a strange state of idleness and expectation of the forthcoming mysterious revolution : as the promoters of it, however, did not appear, many were inclined to ascribe the whole to political *espionnage* ; especially as the people then congregated made no attempt to disturb the public tranquillity ; seeming to be actuated more by motives of curiosity, and dread of secret agitators, than by any revolutionary zeal or desire of change.

Resistance however to authority did show itself on one occasion ; when a private of the Stirling yeomanry, proceed-

ing from Kilsyth to Falkirk, fell in with a radical crew, who demanded his arms: refusing, however, to surrender them, and escaping several shots, he returned to his former quarters at Kilsyth; whence the commanding officer immediately detached a party of cavalry to scour the road, and clear it of insurgents: these in the mean time had been considerably reinforced; and, having found arms as well as food in the neighboring houses, posted themselves advantageously on a rising ground at Bonnymuir; though they subsequently abandoned it on the approach of the cavalry, and sought the protection of a wall: behind this, they opened a fire on their assailants, from whose charge they were also defended by the boggy nature of the ground: hence the soldiers were obliged to make a circuitous approach to a gap, where readier means of access appeared; which movement being perceived by the others, they ran in haste to dispute the passage, but the greater part hurried off to their respective homes; while of those who made a show of resistance, many were severely wounded, and nineteen captured. The majority of those implicated in this petty insurrection had arrived that morning from Glasgow, expecting to find a large multitude of associates, drawn according to a preconcerted plan from the neighboring districts: their intention, as it appeared, was to seize on the Carron iron-works; equip themselves there with arms, especially with artillery; and thence institute a regular plan of operations: but the judicious arrangements of the magistrates, aided by the military, intirely frustrated their combinations; so that, instead of the four or five thousand expected to muster at Bonnymuir, not a hundred came: all open rebellion, therefore, was crushed; in a few days, the storm passed over; and tranquillity succeeded to this political commotion. A special commission being appointed to try the offenders, numerous convictions took place; but the royal clemency was extended to all except three persons, one of them long known as a promoter of sedition, and the other two captured in open conflict with the cavalry: the behaviour of these delinquents at their execution differed much from that of Thistlewood and his coadjutors; for they exhibited a deep contrition for their political guilt, and were sensibly affected by religious feelings.

Meanwhile, the elections, though in many cases marked by strong party contests, proceeded without any acts of outrageous violence: the opposition gained a very slight accession to its numbers, and the new parliament appeared likely to take the complexion of that which preceded it. On the twenty-first of

April, its members began to assemble, and were occupied in taking the requisite oaths till the twenty-third; on which day Mr. Manners Sutton was unanimously re-chosen speaker: on the twenty-seventh, his majesty opened the first session in person, declaring in his speech, that he should follow his father's example in solicitude for the welfare of the nation; that economy should be observed in the public expenditure; and that the regal dignity should be supported without any additional burdens on the people: he expressed a determination to maintain public peace and tranquillity; lamented the pressure of distress, aggravated as it was by a spirit of sedition; and concluded with a hope, that the misguided multitude might be brought back to a proper sense of their errors. The king appeared on this occasion in good spirits, though not in strong health: the crowds assembled were unprecedented; and he was loudly cheered, both in his progress to the house and on his return; but the most anxious period of his reign was fast approaching.

One of the first acts of the legislature referred to a subject of vital importance to the constitution: proof having been established of the venality and corruption prevailing in Grampound, lord John Russell had brought forward a bill last session for the purpose of disfranchising that borough, and transferring its elective privilege to Leeds: he now resumed the prosecution of this measure; and all necessary preliminaries being adjusted, a second reading was moved on the nineteenth of May. Though scarcely any opposition manifested itself against the merited punishment of a disreputable borough, in which, as one of its corporate body observed, by way of palliation, 'there might perhaps be two or three voters who had taken no bribes;' yet, with regard to the disposal of its elective privileges, much conflict of opinion arose: but before the house could arrive at any decision on the subject, eventful circumstances occurred, which completely engrossed its attention, and annihilated, as it were, all other interest.

The noble mover of the bill, however, feeling secure that this vile borough would no longer disgrace the representation of the country, triumphantly exclaimed:—'Alas, the glory of Grampound is gone for ever! the electors will no more have the pleasure of witnessing an honorable baronet sending, from pure motives of charity, confidential agents to relieve their distresses, and minister to their wants: no more shall they be delighted with the gratifying spectacle of the merchants of London contending for the honor of representing them in par-

liament : never again shall they have the satisfaction of almost murdering those who had the hardihood to propound to them the bribery oath !' This mock lamentation was cheered by all the friends of reform, and hailed as a favorable omen of the general sense of the house on the subject.

At this period, sir James Mackintosh, who had already devoted much of his time and profound knowledge of jurisprudence to the renewed plan for amending our criminal code, moved for leave to bring in six bills, founded on the suggestions of the committee appointed to consider that important subject last session. Three out of these six, after much and lengthened discussion, especially in the upper house, finally passed into laws : the first was, to repeal the act by which private stealing in shops, to the value of forty shillings, was made punishable by death ; but, on the suggestion of the lord chancellor, that penalty was retained against those who should so steal to an amount exceeding ten pounds : the second went to repeal certain acts, which visited with capital punishment a class of actions which could hardly be considered as constituting moral guilt : by these, it had been rendered a capital crime for an Egyptian to remain one year within the realm ; so also for notorious thieves to reside in Cumberland or Northumberland ; and for any one to be found disguised in the Mint, or injuring Westminster-bridge : the third bill repealed various clauses in certain acts, which constituted the offences specified in them capital ; and which, by this amended act, would be converted from capital into simple felonies. Of the offences thus modified were the taking away any maid, wife, or widow, for the sake of her fortune ; the receiving of stolen goods ; the destroying of trees, breaking down banks of rivers, or wounding cattle ; the sending of threatening letters ; and all capital offences created by the marriage act and laws of bankruptcy : to these several crimes, differing as they did in consequence, was attached, as the law yet stood, the indiscriminate penalty of death : this, however, with certain exceptions in special cases, was now altered to transportation, imprisonment, or hard labor, within the discretionary powers of the court : thus, the statute-book of England was purified from many grievous stains ; several gross anomalies, offensive both to reason and to justice, were rectified ; and unfading wreaths of civic glory adorn the busts of Romilly and Mackintosh. A bill for amending the marriage act, by giving validity retrospectively, in certain cases of hardship, to marriages invalid by the existing law, was read a second time in the lords, but was successfully

resisted, on the motion made for its re-commitment ; chiefly through the arguments of the lord chancellor.

Mr. Brougham, having rendered an important service to his country by efforts to establish a system for detecting and remedying abuses in charitable funds and establishments, now brought forward his celebrated plan for the education of the poor : but this subject, embracing so much to interest the feelings of society, and opening so large a field for discussion, was not destined to obtain the concurrence of parties : though the object in view was generally admitted to be desirable, many were the obstacles in the way of its accomplishment, when almost every class of men had some objection to offer : the main difficulty, however, and that which is thought principally to have determined its author to abandon it, arose from the dissenters ; to whom it appeared, that some enactments of the bill originated in imperfect information respecting that class of persons ; and they thought it strange, that a liberal statesman should have paid so little regard, not only to their numbers, property, and intelligence, but to their moral and religious character, as to subject the whole matter to the management of the established clergy : the progress of this measure was watched assiduously by the committee of the Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty, which also sent a deputation to confer with its author on those clauses which were thought objectionable ; and the consequence was, that the bill, after having been read for the first time on the eleventh of July, was altogether abandoned. This failure, however, had no effect in damping Mr. Brougham's ardor in the cause of education : on the contrary, it served rather to give additional zeal to his endeavors in promoting the same benevolent object by other and better-digested methods.

Another resolution of importance, moved by Mr. Holme Sumner, was for a select committee to take into consideration the agricultural state of the country : the table of the house was loaded with petitions from all quarters, complaining of distress on this score ; and their general prayer was for additional restrictions : previous efforts to maintain prices at an unnatural height had all failed : the depression in the value of produce still continued ; and the general cry of the agriculturists, eager to avert from themselves an evil which was in fact inevitable, was now for a high permanent duty in place of a limited prohibition : such views, however, were not entertained with similar complacency by the classes engaged in manufactures and commerce ; who, feeling equally the pressure of the

times, anticipated no alleviation, but rather increased suffering, from any measure, however plausible, which tended to raise the price of corn.

Debates resulting from this motion of the honorable member for Surrey occupied much time and attention : it was seconded by Mr. Western, and supported by Mr. Gooch, both county members, who repeated the statement, that without protection our agriculturists were unable to compete with foreign growers ; that the act of 1815 had afforded them little or no such protection ; and that some measures more effectual were indispensable, though the speakers themselves declined to suggest them. Mr. F. Robinson, then president of the board of trade, deprecated the motion, as tending to excite hopes which could not be fulfilled : he ridiculed the absurdity of imagining, that any acts of legislation could alter the depression, while not even the prohibition of imports had been able to raise prices to the protected level ; and he blamed the unreasonable spirit and latent objects of the agriculturists, who, in declining to name a specific remedy, had either none to suggest, or only the monstrous proposition, which had been already broached, of a permanent duty of forty shillings : he was followed in the debate by Messrs. Baring and Ricardo ; the latter of whom, celebrated for his profound knowledge of political economy, entered into a luminous exposition of the principles of that science, condemning all restrictions on the freedom of the corn trade as injurious in their tendency.

After a lengthened discussion, however, the party belonging to the landed interest in the house prevailed, and the motion for a committee was carried ; but next evening ministers collected all their forces, and succeeded in neutralising its effect, by proposing that its inquiries should be limited to the best mode of ascertaining the weekly average of corn prices : this indeed was denounced by the other party as a bare-faced trick to annul the vote of the preceding night ; but it passed by a large majority, and every material alteration of the corn laws was deferred for a season. To all that were disinterested on the subject, it seemed, that no immediate remedy for existing evils could be devised ; and that the only hope in this general distress must arise from the lenient hand of time, and continuance of peace ; when a perseverance in rigid economy and careful retrenchment might authorise a gradual diminution of taxation, and an increase of foreign demand might carry off our abundant supplies of merchandise : indeed, a commercial question of still greater importance than that which had lately

occupied the house, was at this period introduced by petitions from the cities of London and Glasgow, in favor of free trade. The comparative stagnation of foreign commerce since the peace, and the desire of giving a new impulse to its activity at any risks, had occasioned a general repugnance among mercantile men to that system of international restrictions, under which our trade had formerly been supposed to flourish with extraordinary vigor: the general advantages of unrestricted commerce had for some time been recognised by political economists; but the doctrine was little relished by British merchants, so long as this country, by her maritime superiority during seasons of war, had enjoyed a monopoly: it appeared also, notwithstanding many strong arguments based on abstract and philosophical principles, to be a doubtful point, which could be resolved only by experience, whether a state, so favored by maritime position and superior enterprise as to have gained the carrying-trade of the world, can profit by admitting others to a participation of its advantages; more especially when the exertions of that state, which has acquired such a superiority, are clogged by financial difficulties, from which its rivals are comparatively free: whatever weight may be due to these considerations, it is certain, that at this time the opposite opinions had gained hold extensively, not only on political economists, but on mercantile men themselves; and that they were not discouraged by the leading members of administration.

The petition of the London merchants was presented to the house of commons by Mr. A. Baring, one of the most eminent men of their community both for wealth and intelligence, who prefaced it with an able and well-digested speech; the main scope of which was to impress on the house the doctrine, that freedom from restriction is calculated to give the utmost extension to foreign trade, as well as the best direction to capital and industry; while the maxim, of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest, which regulates an individual merchant, is strictly applicable, as the best rule, to the trade of the whole nation: no formal motion, however, on the subject was entertained by the commons during this session; but in the house of lords the propriety of a change in our commercial policy was formally suggested by lord Lansdowne on the twenty-sixth of May. After an able speech, the leading principles of which were directed to the abolition of all duties absolutely prohibitory, to a relaxation of our navigation laws, to the cultivation of trade with France, and to the opening of

East Indian monopoly,—he concluded by moving for a select committee of inquiry on the means of extending and securing the foreign trade of this country.

This proposal elicited a remarkable speech from the earl of Liverpool, in which his lordship, as head of the administration, gave assent to the principles of free trade; expressing his belief, that it would have been better for the world if those principles had always been acted on; and advising the recognition of such exceptions only, as the actual policy of the world and existing laws of this country dictated: for instance, he defended the continuance of protection to the British growers of corn, as well as to persons engaged in the silk trade: the peculiar situation of Ireland also, in his opinion, demanded hesitation before duties were removed from foreign linen, by which the chief manufacture of that island was protected: but, with a general caution on these and some other details, he gave his cordial assent to the proposal for a committee; and the motion was unanimously carried.

The civil list, after the rejection of a motion for inquiry made by lord John Russell, was settled at £1,057,000; and on the nineteenth of June the chancellor of the exchequer produced his financial statement. In the army estimates there was an increase of £804,000, owing to the augmentation of force required by the peculiar state of the country: the estimate also of naval expenditure went beyond that of the preceding year by £150,000, being calculated at £5,586,000; while the sum total for the service of the year, including the interest of the debt, was estimated at £50,500,000. The ways and means proposed to meet this enormous expenditure, were, exclusive of permanent revenues, a continuation of the customary annual taxes, amounting to £3,000,000 sterling; the sum of £2,500,000, from the produce of temporary excise duties, which had remained in force since the war; £240,000 arising from the lottery; £260,000 from old naval stores; exchequer bills for £7,000,000, to be funded; and £12,000,000, taken from that sacred depository, the sinking fund.

All questions, however, financial, commercial, or political, were at this period interrupted by the arrival of queen Caroline from Italy, whither she had retired from persecution by the advice of Mr. Canning, in 1814. The whole cabinet, as well as the king, was thrown into consternation by this event; all preparations which had been made for his majesty's coronation were deferred; and the public mind soon became engaged by one exciting and engrossing topic, the mutual declaration of

war between George IV. and his consort : it is necessary, however, to a right understanding of this contest, that some previous movements should be detailed.

While the high personage in question was occupied in travelling, her name seldom appeared before the public, except in casual extracts from some foreign journals : but though the multitude seemed to be regardless almost of her existence, subsequent disclosures showed that the conduct of her royal highness had been strictly scrutinised, and inquiries instituted, in order to ascertain, if possible, what credit was due to reports which, if true, would fix the most degrading stigma on her character ; since she was charged with no less an offence than that of living in open adultery with an Italian courier, named Bergami, whom she had raised from that low station to the first office in her household. Accordingly, our government thought proper to send commissioners to several German and Italian states, for the purpose of collecting evidence respecting this conduct ; but their reports were not divulged ; nor were any measures of publicity adopted, arising out of information thus obtained.

In consequence, however, of such movements, it is supposed that Mr. Brougham, the princess's legal and confidential adviser, made a proposal, in June, 1819, to lord Liverpool, that the income of £35,000 per annum, at that time enjoyed by her royal highness, but which was to expire on the demise of George III., should be secured to her for life, provided she consented to reside constantly abroad, without ever assuming the rank and title of queen : this singular proposition was stated at the time to be made without the authority, or even knowledge of the princess ; but the reply from government signified, that no indisposition would be felt, at the proper season, to give due attention to its terms, provided they received the sanction of her royal highness. Thus the negotiation terminated for the present : but when, by the accession of George IV., his consort became *de facto* queen of Great Britain, it then seemed necessary, that some line of conduct should be taken regarding her, which might prevent disclosures that were on all accounts to be deprecated : a compromise, therefore, founded on Mr. Brougham's former proposal, was submitted to that gentleman, to be transmitted to the princess ; and in lieu of £35,000, it was now proposed that she should receive £50,000 per annum, on condition of her renouncing the royal title, and residing permanently out of the realm : by some fatality, however, the document contain-

ing this proposal was never communicated to the principal party concerned; while the great distance which separated Mr. Brougham from his illustrious client offered an insuperable bar to that prompt despatch which was desirable on so important an occasion. The queen, who had been making an excursion into the French dominions, returned to Tuscany in the beginning of February, 1820; at which period no official intelligence had reached her of the death of George III.; so that she became apprised of that event only by the public journals, which also indicated the omission of her name in the liturgy: toward the end of the same month, she visited Rome, where she immediately assumed her royal title, and demanded a guard of honor from the papal government: in reply to which requisition, cardinal Gonsalvi stated, that having received no official communication on this subject from the king or his ministers, his holiness did not know that the queen of England was in Rome, and consequently could not grant her a guard of honor.

Incensed by this answer, her majesty drew up a narrative, dated March 16, describing the various insults she had received from foreign courts, particularly from that of Vienna, and the representatives of the court of Hanover; by which she had been driven to the necessity of selling her villa on the lake of Como, and taking refuge in the Roman territory: she also stated, that she had written to lords Liverpool and Castlereagh, demanding that her name should be inserted in the liturgy, and orders given to British ambassadors, ministers, and consuls to receive and acknowledge her as queen; also that a palace should be prepared for her in England, her real home, to which she intended immediately to repair: 'I have dismissed,' she said, 'my Italian court, retaining only a sufficient number of persons to conduct me to England; and if Buckingham-house, Marlborough-house, or any other palace is refused me, I shall take a house in the country, till my friends can find one for me in London.' This document, together with her letter to lord Liverpool, appeared in the English newspapers about the middle of April, and their extensive circulation excited a general notion that the queen was rapidly proceeding toward this country: various reasons, however, concurred, which induced her to prolong her sojourn at Rome; so that she did not arrive at Geneva till the ninth of May; whence she despatched a letter to Mr. Brougham, requiring his attendance, either there or at one of the French sea-ports. In consequence of this communication, a consultation was held

by Messrs. Brougham and Denman, aided by other friends of the queen; the result of which was a humble request, that her majesty would, without loss of time, repair to Calais, where there was a ready communication with the shores of England; it being at that juncture impossible to foretell how often it might be necessary for the queen's law officers to have access to, and consult her, respecting her views or wishes.

Pursuant to such advice, her majesty quitted Geneva, directing Mr. Brougham to meet her, on the thirtieth of May, at St. Omers; but during her route thither, she was joined by lady Anne Hamilton, who had formerly belonged to her household; and by alderman Wood, one of the representatives of the city of London, who at this time was a great favorite with the working classes and lower orders of people. It appeared afterwards, that, from the time of her quitting Great Britain, she had been in correspondence with this gentleman; and his advice, proceeding from a conviction that the rumors against her were unfounded, and that her presence would occasion the greatest possible embarrassment to government, was, that she should come at once to England. 'He knew,' says Mr. Cobbett, 'the disposition of the people with regard to her and with regard to her husband; and her return was most anxiously desired by every friend of popular rights.'

Her majesty's movements, which, prior to the appearance of these friends on the scene, had been marked by tardiness and vacillation, now became rapid and determined: on the twentieth, she arrived at Villeneuve le Roi; whence she wrote a letter full of angry denunciation to the duke of York, another to lord Liverpool, declaratory of her intention to be in London within five days, reiterating also her demand of a palace; and a third to lord Melville, as head of the admiralty, desiring that a royal yacht might be ready at Calais to convey her to the British shores. This promptitude showed that her majesty viewed her situation in an altered light; for the day on which she now fixed for her entry into London was the very next to that on which Mr. Brougham could, by any possibility, meet her, according to her appointment, at St. Omers: that gentleman, however, accompanied by lord Hutchinson, a personal friend of the king, who was entrusted with a confidential communication, sent forward a courier to the place of rendezvous, and arrived himself on the third of June: here, however, an intricate, and as yet unravelled piece

¹ History of George IV. § 423.

of diplomacy, disturbed all arrangements: ministers, having determined, from the evidence in their possession, that the queen never could be received in England with the honors due to royalty, and being anxious to avert the necessity of laying that evidence before the public eye, indulged to the last moment a hope that she would agree to the terms of remain abroad, rather than risk the consequence of such a disclosure.

The communication which Mr. Brougham had been directed to submit to her majesty on this subject in April was understood by them as forming the basis of his negotiation, whenever he might have a personal interview with her; and the task which lord Hutchinson had undertaken was considered as wholly unnecessary in the event of a successful issue to the proposition of the queen's own advocate: all his lordship had to do was, in the extreme case of a rejection by the queen of the ministerial overtures, to present himself before her majesty, in virtue of his relations of friendly confidence both with herself and the king; to impress on her mind the important resolve which government had felt itself compelled to make; and to convince her, that no other alternative remained, if she persisted in her resolution of landing in Great Britain, than to exhibit against her a public charge of adultery. All hopes however of success in this arrangement were frustrated by the immediate introduction of lord Hutchinson to her majesty, who was informed by Mr. Brougham, that his lordship was entrusted with a message to her from the king: his situation at this interview was peculiarly embarrassing; and though it lasted a considerable time, no conversation arose except on topics foreign to its purpose: her majesty could hardly be expected to begin such a subject, and his lordship could not allude to it himself; since his commission was not to commence, until a complete failure of Mr. Brougham's negotiations should render it necessary. After this, a correspondence took place; and the queen demanded, through Mr. Brougham, that lord Hutchinson should instantly submit his proposition in writing: but his lordship, in reply, stated, that he had only with him some scattered memoranda on scraps of paper, and intimated a wish of communicating his message verbally: the queen, however, in her answer, expressed much surprise that he was not ready to state the terms of a proposition of which he was the bearer; and, to give him an opportunity of arranging them, declared she would wait till five o'clock in the evening: a few minutes before that time, his lordship made

his inauspicious attempt at mediation in a letter, the principal terms of which were, that ministers proposed to settle £50,000 per annum on her majesty for life, subject to such conditions as the king might impose: those conditions, he had reason to know, were, that she was not to assume the style and title of queen of Great Britain, or any other title attached to the royal family of England; also that she was not to reside in England, or even to visit that country: the consequence of such visit would be an immediate message to parliament, and an end put to all compromise or negotiation: to this letter, which concluded with the writer's earnest supplication that her majesty would take the proposition it contained into calm consideration, and not misinterpret the advice of one who could have no motive in giving her fallacious council,—an answer was instantly returned, indignantly rejecting the proposal, as one that could not be listened to for a moment. Lord Hutchinson, who appears to have been wholly unprepared for so peremptory a refusal, attempted to renew the negotiation by a note to Mr. Brougham, intimating his desire of sending a courier to England for new instructions; and proposing to become the medium, through which any offer might be conveyed to government: but her majesty, having discharged her foreign suite, including her chamberlain and supposed paramour, had left St. Omers before this note arrived: so abruptly indeed had she quitted the hotel, that Mr. Brougham himself was scarcely sensible of her leaving the apartment, till he beheld her rapidly passing by in a carriage, with alderman Wood and lady Anne Hamilton. Arriving at Calais about half-past ten at night, she proceeded, without waiting for her carriages, to the pier; and, though the tide was out, insisted on being put on board the packet immediately: this extreme haste she ascribed to her fear of the French government, and the influence which her husband was known to possess with the heads of it. Lord Hutchinson's last note, despatched after her by Mr. Brougham, found her majesty on board; but neither its terms, nor his added supplication, could induce her to change her purpose: irritated by studied insults abroad, incensed by threats of ministerial vengeance, brooding over the treatment she had met with at her husband's hands, and, above all, assured of that popular support which she expected would carry her through all difficulties or dangers, this infuriated woman reached the shores of England on the sixth of June. Neither the king nor his ministers contemplated her arrival: no orders had been sent to

Dover; and the commandant received her with a royal salute, while the multitude met her on the beach with acclamations, banners, and every sign of popular enthusiasm. Her progress to London was like a triumphal procession; and at the metropolis, at least 200,000 persons, receiving her with shouts of joy, would have conducted her at once to Carlton-house, had she not been induced to go to Mr. Wood's mansion in South Audley-street; where she exhibited herself and the alderman to the gaze of the assembled multitude. It was not that the great body of the people believed her wholly innocent of the charges brought against her; 'but,' says one who well knew their feelings, 'they, in their sense of justice, went back to the time when she was in fact turned out of her husband's house, with a child in her arms, without blame of any sort having been imputed to her: they compared what they had *heard* of the wife with what they had *seen* of the husband; and they came to their determination accordingly: as far as related to the question of guilt or innocence, they cared not a straw; but they took a large view of the matter; they went over her whole history; they determined that she had been wronged, and they resolved to uphold her.'²

The queen's arrival at Calais, on her road to England, had been communicated to ministers by telegraph; and their deliberations in council were held during several hours of the night, as well as the whole morning of the sixth of June: the result was, that the king was obliged to take the field against a woman, whose

unconquerable will
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield,

interested the feelings of the people in her favor; while the distress of the times and the arts of designing demagogues engaged on her side all that base portion of the populace, which is the chief instrument of confusion.

As parliament was now sitting, his majesty took the opportunity of going in state to the house of lords, that he might give his royal assent to some bills; and when he had left the house, lord Liverpool brought down a message, to be read from the woolsack, with a communication of certain papers relative

² Cobbett's History of George IV. § 425. Thus, with regard to the omission of her name in the Liturgy, when it was said, that she was included in the general prayer, her counsel, Mr. Denman, strikingly remarked, 'that if it was included in any general prayer, it was in that for 'all who are desolate and oppressed.'

to the conduct of her majesty since her departure from the kingdom, which he recommended to the immediate and serious attention of their lordships. The papers referred to were laid on the table, under seal, in a green bag; a similar message, with a sealed bag, being presented to the house of commons by lord Castlereagh: and both ministers announced their intention of moving for an address to the king, and a reference of the papers to a secret committee, on the following day: the notification of lord Liverpool provoked no discussion among the peers; but Mr. Grey Bennet, and several other members of opposition in the commons, expressed themselves on the subject in terms of great asperity.

The proceedings of both houses on the seventh were regarded with deep interest: lord Liverpool, having moved a ceremonial address, containing no pledge or opinion, proposed that the papers on the table should be submitted to a secret committee of fifteen peers, to be appointed by ballot; having for its object to inquire whether any and what course of proceeding, should be adopted. The address was agreed to without opposition, and the secret committee formed on the following day; when lords Erskine and Lansdowne, being among the members appointed, thought proper to withdraw their names.

In the house of commons there was much more excitement: when the time came for taking the king's message into consideration, the minister was anticipated by Mr. Brougham; who presented a communication from her majesty, setting forth that she had returned to England for the purpose of maintaining her innocence and rights; protesting against any secret tribunal appointed by her accusers; complaining of insults which she had received from foreign courts influenced by that of Great Britain, as well as from our ambassadors, and other diplomatic agents; and concluding with an appeal to the justice of the commons of England. After this document had been read, and the cheers with which it was received had subsided, lord Castlereagh rose, and declared that ministers were neither persecutors nor prosecutors; that the king's communication was most gracious; that the secret committee was only a preliminary step to ascertain whether there was any case to proceed with; and that the conduct of an illustrious personage should not be judged without open inquiry and evidence. The appointment of the committee was strongly resisted by Mr. Brougham; since he contended, that although not final, it must deeply affect her majesty's character; and he proceeded to a minute examination of the proposals made to her through

lord Hutchinson, which he reprobated in the severest terms. Mr. Canning replied to this accusation, and vindicated the course taken by ministers; declaring that they had interposed every possible expedient to prevent the present calamity; and, alluding to the propositions originating with Mr. Brougham in 1819, he declared fearlessly, that there was not one of the terms offered to her majesty, which had not its prototype in the suggestions then made to government for the guidance of its conduct: toward the conclusion of his speech, he lamented the failure of negotiations at St. Omers, though he attached no blame to the conduct of the honorable gentleman and the noble lord: advice, no doubt, had been given to her majesty, which, if it had not proceeded from bad intention, was not characterised by *absolute wisdom*: that advice, however, by frustrating the negotiation, had forced this appeal to parliament: finally, he declared that he should take no farther share in these deliberations: once more, however, he interfered, but with a tone of respect and kindly feeling toward the queen; and when the cabinet determined to proceed against her, he resigned his office. After several other members had delivered their opinions, Mr. Wilberforce rose to recommend an adjournment of the debate; hoping that during such an interval, some mode of compromise might be discovered, to prevent this disgusting investigation, which was likely to be so injurious to the character of royalty, as well as to the public morals. Lord Castlereagh, though he anticipated little good from the proposed delay, would not oppose this motion, as it marked the spirit which pervaded the house; a spirit in unison with that on which ministers themselves had acted: in consequence an adjournment took place to the Friday following.

Nearly two days elapsed without any overture on either side; until the queen, yielding to the advice of friends, made a communication to lord Liverpool, through Mr. Brougham; in which, deferring to the expressed opinion of the house of commons, she declared herself ready to take into consideration any arrangement consistent with her dignity and honor: his lordship, in reply, referred her to the memorandum placed in the hands of her own attorney-general; and the queen declared, that this document, which had been superseded by lord Hutchinson's proposition, was now submitted to her for the first time: but, she added, the recognition of her rank and privileges must form the basis of any arrangement. Ministers felt and expressed surprise, that the memorandum had not been sooner communicated to her: and declared, that any

proposition on the king's part must have for its basis the queen's residence abroad : her majesty then declared, that her dignity and honor being secured, she was willing to leave her cause in the hands of any person or persons of high station and character, whom both parties might select ; their decision being, of course, subject to the approbation of parliament ; this proposal was accepted, with the single reservation, that any arrangement should be subject to his majesty's pleasure ; and, in consequence, the duke of Wellington and lord Castlereagh were appointed on behalf of the king ; Messrs. Brougham and Denman being nominated by the queen. Meanwhile, parliament was farther adjourned ; and the referees met, for the first time, on the fifteenth of June, at lord Castlereagh's house, in St. James's-square. The protocol, at this conference, set forth, that ' the queen must not be understood to admit, nor the king to retract, any position ;' with which insuperable barrier before them, the negotiators finished as they began ; for it was contended, *in limine*, on her majesty's behalf, that her name should be inserted in the liturgy ; but this was refused on behalf of the king : both parties were immoveable ; and the conference was broken up. When this rupture of the negotiation was reported to the house of commons on the nineteenth, Mr. Wilberforce gave notice that he had a motion for the following day ; but when the time of making it arrived, he requested and obtained farther delay : though urged to state the nature of his proposition, he carefully guarded the mysterious secret till the twenty-second, when it came out in two resolutions, expressing regret at the recent failure of negotiations, and soliciting her majesty to gratify the house by conceding a few points, not as shrinking from inquiry, but for the sake of amicable arrangement : an amendment was then proposed by lord Archibald Hamilton, the object of which was the insertion of the queen's name in the liturgy ; when an animated debate ensued, in which the speech of sir Francis Burdett, in censure of ministers, produced an electrifying effect on the house ; and he sat down amid loud and universal cheering. Mr. Canning, rising to reply, began by stating, that, however much provoked by the honorable baronet's speech, he should abstain, on this occasion, from entering the lists with him : the conduct of administration was a question which the house would soon have an opportunity of discussing ; and come that question when it might, ministers, either as a body or as individuals, would be fully prepared to meet it. It was not from want of readiness that he now declined the contest :

whatever might be the fate of this night's question, ample opportunities for justification would occur; and he would then be quite ready to meet any opponent with arms, he hoped, of as keen a temper as any that had been, or could be, wielded against him; with denial and defiance, with vindication and retort, equal to those of the most boisterous accuser or noisy cheerer, who raised his voice on the present occasion. This specimen of magniloquent courage provoked a sarcastic retort from Tierney; who observed, that, 'as the better part of valor was discretion, he commended Mr. Canning's prudence, in postponing his defence of ministers till the effect of sir Francis' speech was done away: the very fact proved that it was unanswerable:' the best comment, indeed, on Mr. Canning's boast was, that he left his friends to vindicate themselves, and relieved himself from the necessity of redeeming his pledge by the resignation of his office. Mr. Wilberforce's motion, being supported by ministers, was carried by a majority of 391 against 134.

At this time fears began to be entertained by a certain party, who desired to retain the queen as an instrument to promote their own designs, lest she should retire from the scene, and avoid the troubles rising fast around her, by returning to the continent: prudence and good policy would have dictated this line of conduct; but strenuous efforts were made to support her spirits and encourage her resolution to stay: several eminent characters were introduced to her society; and among them the celebrated Dr. Parr, who installed himself as domestic chaplain, and wrote answers to various addresses which she received: under the more covert agency of designing demagogues, every expedient was employed to instil into her mind a notion that she was the idol of the people; while the passions of the mob were inflamed, and their processions marshalled, in order to promote this scheme. A chief actor in the pantomime was the noted political writer, William Cobbett, who addressed several letters to her majesty on the subject, written in that simple, clear, energetic style, which is so calculated to impose on credulity. 'It was feared,' he said, 'that she would go, even on the dishonorable terms proposed: every effort that I could make in public I made to prevent this; and I made every effort in private also.'³ In his very first communication with her majesty, he observed, 'that the offer made in her name to quit this country, had filled the women's eyes with tears, and

³ History of George IV. § 428.

the men's hearts with a feeling which never before existed in them with regard to her ;' and he implored her to be convinced, ' that no terms, no conditions, no qualifications, could, in public estimation, remove that impression which the consenting to abandon her country must necessarily make ; the fatal consequences of which he could clearly foresee, but had not the heart to describe.' Fearful of the effect which Mr. Wilberforce's motion might produce, he wrote again to the queen, in terms apparently of the most friendly regard ; pointing out the snare, though feeling certain that ' her majesty had too much sagacity not to perceive it.' That gentleman's address, he observed, ' was intended to place her in this dilemma ; namely, to give up to ministers, or to incur the ill-will of the commons ; much therefore would depend on the answer given to it ;' and he presumed to advise, that ' this answer should explicitly reject the advice offered by the address, in a manner calculated to flatter rather than to wound the pride of the house ; also that it should contain incidentally an expression of her fixed determination to remain *at home*—that word, so sweet to English ears ; and so electrifying, if it were to come from the pen of her majesty.' This letter, the writer stated, was not without its effect ; for the queen was induced to decline the advice of the commons ; and the deputation, consisting of Messrs. Wilberforce, Bankes, Stuart Wortley, and sir Thomas Acland, were, on their return, hissed and hooted by the populace : men were appointed to carry green bags suspended to long poles, before them ; and their coachmen were compelled to go at a funeral pace, in order that the deputies might have the benefit of hearing the sentiments of the people. In her answer to an address from the city of London, voted a short time afterwards at a common council, she made the following declaration :—' In the many deep sorrows and afflictions with which it has pleased Providence to visit me, I have derived unspeakable consolation from the zealous and constant attachment of this warm-hearted, just, and generous people ; to live *at home* with, and to cherish whom, will be the chief happiness of the remainder of my days.' ' Thus,' says the author above quoted, in a passage which exhibits no bad specimen of his peculiar style, and of the art with which he contrived to soften the dark shades of a malignant purpose by lights of generous feeling and of honest sympathy, ' thus she was fixed ; thus this grand point was decided, to the lacerating mortification of all sons and daughters of corruption, and to the mortification of nobody more than to that of the legal advisers of her majesty ; who were fairly beaten here, and beaten,

too, by the man whom they hated more than they hated adders and toads. I will not pretend that vindictive feeling had nothing to do with my conduct on this occasion: I had been two years in jail, and had paid a thousand pounds fine besides, for an act which merited the applause and admiration of all good men; and this king had my thousand pounds in his pocket: I had been driven across the Atlantic; I had been stripped of every farthing I possessed in the world; I had been torn from my farm, to earn which I had worked like a horse for twenty years; I had been made a bankrupt, and was then in the rules of the king's bench, in consequence of these two houses, and this king, having passed laws, to enable Sidmouth and Castle-reagh to put me in a dungeon at their pleasure. I will not pretend that the feeling created by these injuries had no effect on my conduct here; and for what purpose has God placed resentment in the breast of man, if it be not to prevent oppression, by showing those who possess power that they are not always safe to exercise it in the doing of wrong? How would it be possible for justice long to continue in the world, if those who have power were always safe from the resentment of the oppressed? But, leaving this out of the question, what part more friendly could I have acted toward this poor queen? The king had distinctly accused her in his message to the two houses; he had consented to her having a pension, and not to prosecute her, if she would go away, and live out of the kingdom. Where is there a human being who would not have concluded that she was conscious of her guilt, if she had gone away? no matter on what terms; every one would have concluded that she was conscious of guilt; and that very people, who sustained her with so much generosity and such matchless resolution, would never have consented to her receiving one farthing out of their earnings in the way of pension: therefore, I was a faithful adviser of the queen, and at the same time availed myself of her cause to further what I deemed the political interests of the people.'

The foregoing extracts have been quoted, because without this key the conduct of this wretched queen cannot be justly estimated: she had indeed legal advisers, on whom much obloquy was thrown at the time, and probably with much injustice; for, as in the case of a government, when a party behind the throne counteracts the designs of administration; so in this unhappy affair responsible advisers were placed in the foreground, while the influential persons stood out of view.

Every hope of conciliation being now at an end, the com-

mons, on the motion of lord Castlereagh, voted a farther adjournment, in order to leave initiative proceedings to the lords; but the parliamentary discussions, as well as the publication of negotiations and conferences, with comments by partisans on each side, turned the whole kingdom into one great arena of disputation in the interest of which all other interests appeared to merge. On the fourth of July, the secret committee made their report; stating, 'that the charges appeared calculated so deeply to affect, not only the honor of the queen, but the dignity of the crown, and the moral character of the country, that in their opinion it was necessary they should become the subject of a solemn inquiry, which might best be effected in the course of a legislative proceeding.'

Next day, lord Dacre, who, on the twenty-sixth of June, had presented a petition from the queen, protesting against any secret inquiry, and requesting time to bring her witnesses from abroad, as well as to be heard by counsel at the bar of the house, presented another, in which she demanded to be heard by counsel against the report: but the motion made for this purpose was negatived; and, on the sixth of July, the earl of Liverpool, in pursuance of the committee's recommendation, brought in a bill of pains and penalties, or moved for an act of parliament, according to precedents in former ages, which might pronounce the queen guilty of adulterous intercourse, degrade her from her exalted station, and dissolve the marriage between her and the king. According to forms observed in the house of lords, it was requisite that this bill should be read a first time, as a preliminary step to the introduction of evidence: this being done, a copy of it was sent to her majesty through the hands of sir Thomas Tyrwhitt, usher of the black rod; and the seventeenth of August was fixed for a second reading, when the trial of her majesty may be said actually to have commenced: on that day there appeared, in support of the bill, sir R. Gifford and sir J. Copley, the king's attorney and solicitor-general; Sir C. Robinson, the king's advocate-general; Dr. Adams, a civilian; and Mr. Parke, an outer barrister: on the part of the queen, appeared her attorney-general, Mr. Brougham; her solicitor-general, Mr. Denman; Dr. Lushington, a civilian; with Messrs. Williams, Tindal, and Wilde, outer barristers: Mr. Maule, solicitor to the treasury, assisted by Mr. Powel, an attorney who had been employed at Milan in collecting evidence, acted as agent for the bill; and Mr. Vizard, as agent for the accused.

On the eleventh of July, the queen petitioned, and on the

fourteenth, lord Erskine moved, that she should be furnished with a list of the times and places specified in the charges, as well as of the witnesses to be brought against her: this advantage, however, which she would have had in case of impeachment, being opposed by the chancellor and other peers, was now refused. If the slightest hopes of conciliation yet remained, they were dispersed by the queen's 'Letter to the King,' written under the influence of her secret advisers, recapitulating wrongs past and present, and attacking with infinite force and bitterness both her husband and the parliament. 'Even,' she said, 'on the slave-mart, the cries of, 'O my mother! O my child!' have prevented a separation of the victims of avarice; but your advisers, more inhuman than slave-dealers, remorselessly tore the mother from the child . . . your court was the scene, not of polished manners and refined intercourse, but of low intrigue and scurrility, in which spies, bacchanalian talebearers, and foul conspirators swarmed.' Speaking of the house of lords, she says, 'to regard such a body as a court of justice would be to calumniate that sacred name; and for me to suppress the expression of my opinion, would be to lend myself to my own destruction, as well as to an imposition on the nation and the world. I protest against this species of trial: I demand it in a court where the jurors are taken impartially from among the people, and the proceedings are open and fair: I will not, except compelled by force, submit to any sentence not pronounced by a court of justice.'

In the mean time, the address of the city of London was followed by others from innumerable cities, towns, and villages of the united kingdom. 'The press and the people,' it has been truly said, 'were not idle; nor was the queen herself idle: she took a mansion at Hammersmith, on the banks of the Thames, called Brandenburgh-house; and thither processions of one sort or other with addresses, went every day, except Sundays; and sometimes four or five a day, each containing, on an average, 20,000 people: she was soon obliged to appoint certain days in the week for receiving them: the other days she devoted to rides into different parts of the city and its environs; so that, except during the hours of darkness, she lived in an incessant noise and bustle. Her husband, the sovereign, had some noise to endure also; but it was of a different description: in their processions, when they went to address the queen, the populace generally stopped opposite his palace; and in shouts sufficient to have reached him if he had been in the clouds, they made him acquainted with their

way of thinking, and their resolution with regard to him: when he was obliged sometimes to go from London to the cottage, or from the cottage to London, he took care to move in the dark; but it was surprising with what accuracy the people ascertained his intended movements, and how duly they saluted him as he passed.⁴ While the lower stream of public opinion was thus swelling to a torrent, on which the queen was buoyed up; the opposite party were busily employed in preparing for the approaching investigation; in aid of which many witnesses, principally drawn from Italian states, were rapidly arriving at different ports: one party of these, on landing at Dover, were so roughly handled by the populace, that they were re-conveyed back to Holland; whence they were subsequently brought up the Thames to London: there all were provided with a lodging in Cotton garden, a spot contiguous to the two houses of parliament, being under the protection of large bodies of military stationed in the neighborhood, and of an armed vessel, carrying about sixteen guns, moored in the river.

On the seventeenth of August, soon after nine in the morning, the lords began to take their places; having had to make their way through mobs of the most alarming kind, which surrounded the two houses, and filled every street in the vicinity: the judges were requested to assist at their deliberation; and the names of the peers having been called over at ten, lord Liverpool moved the order of the day for the second reading of the bill of pains and penalties: the duke of Leinster opposed this measure, and moved that the order should be rescinded; on a division, however, the amendment was negatived, and the earl of Liverpool then moved that counsel be called in, and heard in support of the preamble of the bill.

The earl of Caernarvon, in a very able speech, stated his reasons for opposing the present measure; when a discussion took place, questioning the propriety of the course about to be pursued; for it was thought by many, that the crime of which the queen was accused amounted to high treason, and demanded a different mode of trial: the doubts arising on this point were submitted to the judges; who, having conferred together in private, delivered their opinion in favor of the method pursued by government: the act of a foreigner, it was said, who owed no allegiance to the crown, could not amount to

⁴ See Cobbett's History of George IV. § 433.

high treason; and unless there were a man who could be legally charged with that crime, it could not be said that treason had been committed. When counsel made their appearance at the bar, Mr. Brougham obtained leave to state his objections to the principle of the bill in its present state of progress, which he did at great length, and with extraordinary talent: indeed, the speeches of the advocates on both sides of this exciting question may be perused as models of a high order in their respective styles of forensic eloquence; but the great length to which they ran prohibits their insertion in these pages, while a scanty epitome would be an act of injustice toward their authors. Mr. Brougham, taking advantage of the popular feeling that had been exhibited, concluded with appealing to the sagacity and fears, as well as to the honor of their lordships:—‘true it is,’ he said, ‘that your committee has reported in favor of the bill, but that cannot pledge the house; and he is the greatest of all fools, who consults his apparent consistency at the expense of his absolute ruin: the sooner you retrace the steps into which you may have been led at an unwary moment, the greater will be the service you render to your country: if you decide that this bill ought not to proceed, you will be the saviors of the state.’ Mr. Denman followed on the same side, with a speech of great eloquence, during which he was interrupted by a sudden movement around him, caused by the entrance of her majesty, who came unexpectedly to witness the proceedings: after hearing her solicitor-general declare, that whatever might be the consequences of that investigation, whatever the sufferings inflicted on her majesty, he would never withdraw from her that homage and respect which were due to her high station, her superior mind, and those resplendent virtues which had shone through her life of persecution; that he would never pay to any other who might usurp her place that respect and duty which belonged to her,—the queen withdrew; having been treated by the house with every mark of respect. The speeches of her counsel were answered with consummate ability by the king’s attorney and solicitor-general; and Mr. Brougham, in reply, urged a variety of arguments in favor of his original proposition, and showed the impolicy of the principle contended for by his opponents.

Public expectation was now at its height, when successive attempts were made, on the nineteenth of August, by lords King and Grey, to stop all farther proceedings; but their

motions were negatived by immense majorities, and the attorney-general was ordered by the lord chancellor to state his case. This statement, which was very able, and detailed very disgraceful scenes, occupied two days; making an impression, not only on the house, but also on the public, which required all the efforts of demagogues to counteract:⁵ the close of it was drowned in the noise of drums, trumpets, and tumultuous acclamations from the immense multitudes that accompanied the queen to the house. Soon after her entrance, the examination of witnesses commenced, which gave rise to an extraordinary incident; for her majesty, hearing the clerk of the commons call the name of Theodore Majocchi, the third witness, started from her seat with a loud but indistinct cry; rushed out of the house; and returned with great speed to her own residence: this man had been one of her domestic servants; and it must ever remain matter of conjecture, whether the exclamation was a consequence of her conscious guilt taken by surprise, or of indignation at his treacherous ingratitude. The examination of witnesses occupied uninterrupted attention to the sixth of September; and on the seventh, the solicitor-general, in a masterly manner, summed up the evidence in support of the bill: on the ninth, in consequence of an application from her majesty's counsel, an adjournment took place to the third of October, when Mr. Brougham entered on the defence in a speech of surpassing power: being followed in a train of impressive eloquence by Mr. Williams, who adverted to many prominent points, sworn to in the prosecution, which he declared he should be able to rebut by the clearest testimony: the examination of witnesses on behalf of the queen lasted from the fifth of October to the twenty-fourth: when Mr. Denman proceeded to sum up the evidence in a speech which lasted two successive days, in which he took a retrospective view of the whole proceedings, as contrasted in prosecution and defence, interspersed with numerous illustrative remarks; but

⁵ 'I was in Hertfordshire,' says Cobbett, 'when this speech was made: coming home, and finding what the impression had been, I wrote and published an answer to it on the twenty-third of August: of this answer more than 100,000 copies were sold: it was printed and reprinted all over the kingdom, and it stayed the plague: it gave a proper turn to the public mind, and even rendered harmless all that could be said afterwards against the queen, even by the solicitor-general, who was the most able lawyer in the kingdom.'

with a fearlessness and license which reached the utmost limit that could be claimed by an advocate: toward the conclusion, he paid the following fine and classical compliment to his great leader in the cause:—‘We have fought,’ he said, ‘the battles of morality, Christianity, and civilised society throughout the world; and, in the language of the dying warrior, I may say:—

‘In this glorious and well-foughten field
We kept together in our chivalry.’

While he was achieving the immortal victory, and the illustrious triumph, protecting innocence and truth by the adamant shield of his prodigious eloquence; it has been my lot to discharge only a few random arrows at the defeated champions of this disgraceful cause: the house will believe me, when I say, that I witnessed the display of his surprising faculties with no other feelings than of sincere gratification that the triumph was complete, and of admiration and delight that the queen’s victory was accomplished.’ Dr. Lushington followed, on the twenty-sixth of October, with a luminous view of the case, aided by those high attainments in the civil law for which he was so distinguished: the king’s attorney and solicitor-general occupied four days in their ingenious replies to the arguments of the queen’s counsel.

On the sixth of November, the peers closed a long and earnest debate of five nights on the second reading of the bill; a measure equivalent to the question of guilty or not guilty in other courts; when the motion was carried by 123 voices against 95, or by a majority of only 28; with protests from many peers on various grounds, the principal of which was the unsatisfactory proof of alleged adultery: a protest also from the queen was read by lord Dacre, in which she not only made the most solemn assertions of innocence, but observed, that ‘unless these unexampled proceedings should bring the bill before the other house, she would make no reference whatever to the treatment experienced by her during the last twenty-five years;’ an *innuendo* which could not fail to produce effect.

As soon as the bill was committed, the small preponderance in its favour was diminished: for when the divorce clause came under discussion, several peers, who considered the queen’s guilt established by the evidence, and were willing to pass the bill in all its other parts, declared their aversion, on religious scruples, to vote for the divorce: the archbishop of York, in particular, explained this as his ground for having voted against

the second reading; while the bishop of Chester, and lord Lauderdale, who had been in the majority on that occasion, from an understanding that the divorce clause would be abandoned, now held the same objection; and the earl of Harrowby, though a cabinet minister, pursued a similar course; though the lord chancellor strongly urged the necessity of perseverance. The archbishop of Canterbury, and the bishop of London, defended divorce on scriptural authority; and the latter is represented to have maintained, that, as the king, by the constitution, could politically do no wrong, he could not commit folly, much less crime; and therefore could afford no opening for recrimination: it was, however, very generally felt, that his majesty, as a husband, had no claim to that relief, which the ecclesiastical courts deny to any other individual, who does not come before them 'with clean hands.'

The partisans of the queen, headed by the noblest and most skilful of her champions, earl Grey, were not slow in seizing the advantage afforded by this difference of opinion among her opponents: they now gave their strongest support to the obnoxious clause; and the manœuvre was successful; for that clause was carried by a majority of one hundred and twenty-nine to sixty-two; nine cabinet ministers being left in the minority. With this encumbrance, the fate of the bill itself became evident; for on the tenth of November, it was read a third time by the disheartening majority of one hundred and eight to ninety-nine. There was yet one question to be put—'that this bill do now pass:' and here the ministers shrunk back: the queen petitioned to be heard by counsel against that final step; and lord Liverpool, in reply, declared, that with so small a majority, in the actual state of public feeling, he and his colleagues abandoned the bill; when a motion was made that the question should be put off to that day six months: this proposal was carried, though not without some strong protests; and the commons, who had been held in readiness for the reception of the bill by repeated adjournments, were now, as well as the peers, released by a prorogation of parliament to the twenty-third of January: thus ended, in defeat and disgrace, the domestic war which George IV. had for twenty-five years carried on against his consort.

On the necessity of these legal proceedings, under all the features which the case latterly assumed, there can be little doubt; but the policy of that conduct which produced them, and occasioned a question of individual vice to be mingled with one of public principle, will always be severely discussed, as

well as the truth or falsehood of the allegations against the queen herself. Whatever may be the verdict of posterity concerning her actual guilt, it must be acknowledged that she was a person of coarse mind and indelicate conduct; though, in justice to her memory, it must be remarked, that much of the evidence against her was tainted with corrupt practices and downright perjury. Whether she was guilty or innocent, the generous feelings of Englishmen, ever ready to espouse the weaker side, were extensively enlisted in the cause of one whom they regarded as an unprotected woman, oppressed by the hatred of her husband, and exposed to the arts of those whom they considered rather as the slaves of his tyrannical will than than as the constitutional advisers of a limited monarch.

On the twenty-ninth of November her majesty, preceded by a numerous cavalcade of gentlemen on horseback, led by sir Robert Wilson, went in state to St. Paul's to return public thanks; on which occasion, the multitude which rallied round the decorated banners borne in procession was so great as to render it a matter of extreme difficulty for her carriage to approach the cathedral: the day however closed, contrary to general expectation, without accident or riot. To the general illuminations, ringing of bells, and firing of cannon, with which the queen's victory had been celebrated at its announcement, succeeded addresses of the lower orders, stimulated by a democratical party, which still wished to retain her as the instrument of their designs: these, however, became too irksome to be long borne by the veriest slave to popularity; and a sort of order was issued in her name, that addresses should be presented to her only on one fixed day of the week; meanwhile, a few of the aristocratical families in opposition, showed her certain marks of attention; and as she no longer required the assistance of a mob, she gradually withdrew herself from the contaminating influence of its leaders: this was the signal for their desertion of her cause; and the account of it is thus described by a democrat of the first order:—'The whig faction flocked about her directly after the abandonment of the bill; and her lawyers, who now called themselves her constitutional advisers, belonged to that faction, which thought to get possession of power by her instrumentality, she having the people at her back: but the people, who hated this faction more than the other, the moment they saw it about her, troubled her with no more addresses; they suffered her to remain very tranquil at Brandenburg-house; the faction agitated questions about her in parliament, concerning which the

people cared not a straw : what she was doing soon became as indifferent to them as what any other person of the royal family was doing ; the people began again to occupy themselves with the business of obtaining a parliamentary reform ; and her way of life, and her final fate, soon became objects of curiosity much more than of interest, with the people.⁶ During the excitement occasioned by the above-mentioned transactions, the duchess of York expired, on the sixth of August, in the fifty-fourth year of her age ; herself also a forsaken wife, but one who exhibited a remarkable contrast to the unhappy queen, by a steady cultivation of the retiring virtues, and a devotion of her time to exercises of charity and extensive benevolence : she was, at her own express desire, privately interred in the village church of Weybridge, near to Oatlands, where she died. On the sixteenth of June, the public funeral of that eminent patriot, Mr. Henry Grattan, took place at Westminster Abbey ; and on the sixth of November, captain Parry returned from his unsuccessful but interesting voyage ; having reached the 113th degree of west longitude, where he passed one winter in latitude 74, yet, though he was at this time obliged to give up the object of his expedition, his opinion remained favorable to the theory of a north-west passage into the Pacific ; and he very soon prepared to renew his attempts to discover it : the Astronomical Society was founded this year, and the colossal head of Memnon, from Egyptian Thebes, deposited in the British Museum.

Though the period which we have just been describing was one of agitation and disturbance in Great Britain, it was tranquillity itself when compared with the state of affairs in many other nations : the two great antagonist principles, in the south of Europe, at this time commenced a struggle, the violence of which was proportionate to the difficulty with which they had been previously coerced. In Spain, Portugal, and Italy the democratic spirit first broke out into open action : the tyranny and misgovernment of Ferdinand VII. had long excited and justified the indignation of all among his subjects who were attached to the principles of freedom, or sensible of shame on account of national disgrace : but the bigoted mass of the people continued to be led by their priests, whose interest it was to support the existing system of despotism : hence every attempt to restore the constitution of 1812 proved abortive, until a total ruin of the finances, added to the disasters of a

⁶ Cobbett's History of George IV. § 454.

colonial war, infused a spirit of discontent into the army assembled at Cadiz, which the court of Madrid could neither pay nor embark: these circumstances enabled Riego and Quiroga to effect that in which Porlier and Lacy had failed; so that the terrified and perfidious monarch was compelled to re-establish the constitution which he had abrogated, and to recall the Cortes, whose prominent members had been for years immured within his dungeons. Alas! how great is the sum of human misery, for which despots and continuators of old abuses have to answer! not only are they chargeable with those evils under which the miserable people groan, who are subject to their tyrannical sway; but with the disorders and desolating fury which generally arise from reaction to that tyranny, when the popular party gains an ascendancy! A delusive plan of universal suffrage having thrown too much power into the hands of the populace, the deputies sent to the Spanish Cortes were chiefly men of strong democratic principles; and there soon appeared proofs, not only of the unsuitable nature of the constitution itself to the spirit and wants of the nation, but of a lamentable deficiency of political wisdom and justice in the majority of the assembly: the nobles, and especially the priests, were hostile to the revolution; yet, instead of conciliating these powerful classes by admitting them to a fair share of legislative power, the constitutionalists would suffer no change in the democratic features of the government; and their first acts were those of outrage on their political opponents. As the most important rights of the sovereign were by the new constitution transferred to the Cortes, these latter proceeded to disgust the nobility by a law abrogating the old system of entails, and still more deeply to incense the clergy by issuing decrees for the immediate suppression of religious orders and houses, and for the sale of their property: the ill effect of such proceedings was soon manifested in various anti-constitutional insurrections headed by the ejected monks, to whom the peasantry were blindly attached; while the constitutionalists, hated both by the king and the nobles, were themselves split into parties, and the whole country became a prey to distraction and misery.

Portugal had suffered under a despotism more odious in its form even than that of Spain; for the continued preference shown by the king for his colonial residence had occasioned the affairs of government to be committed to a vile and obnoxious regency, which was chiefly supported in authority by British officers of despotic principles, maintained in the

highest military commands. As this misruled country contained a small but active party, zealous for constitutional liberty, they were not slow in availing themselves of the example of Spain, and the discontent reigning among all classes of people, to effect a revolution: the flame of insurrection, beginning at Oporto, was quickly communicated to the capital; the regency submitted; the British officers were dismissed; and the constitution of their neighbors was unfortunately taken as a model for that of Portugal. During the discussions on this subject, field-marshal lord Beresford, that most determined enemy of Portuguese liberty, arrived in the Tagus from Rio Janeiro, and expressed an extreme desire to land: but the public alarm excited by this visit was so great, that it was deemed right, for the purpose of ensuring his personal safety, as well as the tranquillity of the capital, to refuse the request, and to hasten his lordship's departure.

But what, it may here be asked, was the conduct of our government toward these interesting countries, in which British warriors had gained their brightest wreaths of glory, and whose inhabitants had contributed so largely to a successful termination of the late war? Unfortunately, the constituent members of our administration, as well as those by whom it was supported, had been brought up in high aristocratic and tory principles: the most influential among them had imbibed a large portion of the spirit of despotism by long and intimate association with continental despots; others were so infected by the fear of innovation in our own constitution, that any movement towards it in other states, especially those of our allies, was regarded with absolute horror: some had been so hacknied in the common routine of a political career, that they were rendered callous to the touch of human sympathy; but, more lamentable still, the great captain of the peninsular war showed little interest in the regeneration of a people who had fought under his victorious banner! No effort, therefore, had been made by that government, which possessed the greatest right of interference, to induce the 'absolute king' to modify his tyrannical acts, and to introduce a system of moderate reform into his administration: no assistance or advice was given to the constitutionalists to preserve them from rash innovations; no attempt made to direct them in a path surrounded by perils; but, when they had involved themselves in difficulties, and drawn down upon their cause the indignation of despotic power, the British government not only received all the denunciations of other courts without regret, but subse-

quently saw, without offering any opposition, the old system of absolute sway introduced into the peninsula, and put into execution with the most rigorous severity: yet what streams of blood might have been stopped, what anguish been prevented, what a cost of treasure and life, since lavished by the natives of this isle itself, been saved, had a spirit of humanity prevailed in our tory cabinet!

Revolutionary doctrines, however, were not confined to the peninsula beyond the Pyrenees; the contagion quickly spread to that beyond the Alps also. In Naples, the establishment of a constitutional government, eagerly desired by a large proportion of the people, had been promised by the king at his restoration, but afterwards prohibited through the interposition of Austria: and the feelings of indignation thence excited were cherished by the Carbonari, a species of freemasons, whose ancient fraternity was converted into a political association, for the restoration of Italian freedom: the example of the Spanish people, between whom and the Italians a political union of ages had produced much corresponding sentiment, gave a sudden impulse to the exertions of this confederacy, by whose influence the Neapolitan army was gained to the cause; and the alarming spectacle was soon exhibited, of a military power prescribing to the monarch a constitution formed after a foreign model. The ramifications of the Carbonari, in a country so central, and so politically situated as Italy, rendered it necessary for the holy allies, either to remain quiet spectators of a general insurrection and probable extension of institutions adverse to the purposes of their confederacy, or to anticipate these movements by force of arms: accordingly, the sovereigns of Russia, Austria, and Prussia met personally in congress at Troppau, where they formally announced their resolution to crush the Neapolitan revolution, and overthrow a constitution which it was declared had been forced on the sovereign by violence: their next step was to send a joint letter, inviting the king of Naples to meet them in a new congress at Laybach, on the frontiers of Italy; with an assurance, that his presence would best assist their anxious views for the welfare of himself as well as of his subjects, and promote a conciliatory adjustment between them: to this insidious proposal, although Austria was already pouring her troops into Lombardy, the Neapolitan parliament had the folly to consent; and Ferdinand embarked on board a British man-of-war for Leghorn, leaving a solemn declaration of his determination to adhere to the fundamental principles of the constitution, which he had sworn to maintain.

The presence of a British fleet, for some time past, in the bay of Naples, tended to corroborate what was formerly acknowledged ; that, although by the constitution of this country the sovereign could not openly profess himself a member of the holy alliance, he fully approved of its principles and purposes ; the great mass, however, of the British people, though they could not but observe much to lament and condemn in many rash proceedings and democratic innovations among the constitutionalists, yet sympathised strongly in the general justice of their cause, and reprobated the declared resolutions of the holy confederates.

This Neapolitan revolution was followed by sanguinary commotions among the Sicilians ; who naturally wished to detach their country from its degrading dependence on Naples, and to reform a system of government, whose base tendencies and injurious oppressions are noted throughout Europe. The Ottoman Porte also attacked its rebellious pasha of Joannina this year ; at the close of which, that atrocious tyrant was closely blockaded in his fortress of Litaritza. France, though not subject to political convulsions, was strongly agitated by the deplorable assassination of the duc de Berri, youngest nephew of Louis XVIII., and the only member of his family who promised to continue a line of heirs to the throne. The law of elections received an important alteration, which was intended to give greater stability to the constitution, by neutralising a portion of the democratic principle : while 258 members of the chamber, as originally constituted, were returned by the electoral colleges, 172 additional deputies were to be chosen by departmental colleges, composed of one-fourth part of the electors ; being such as paid the largest contributions to the public service.

CHAPTER LXI.

GEORGE IV. (CONTINUED.)—1821.

Meeting of parliament—Contest between the queen's friends and ministers—Queen's annuity bill—End of the contest—Extinction of the queen's popularity—Feeling in England against the principles of the holy alliance—Committee voted on the catholic claims, &c.—Motions for parliamentary reform—Disfranchisement of Grampound—Report of the agricultural committee, &c.—Measures to alter the navigation laws, and in favor of free trade—Mr. Hume—Supplies, &c.—Prorogation of parliament—Death of Napoleon—Preparations for the coronation, &c.—Claim preferred by the queen, and rejected—Her attempts to be present at the coronation repulsed—Ceremony of the coronation, &c.—Death of the queen—King's visit to Ireland—Queen's funeral—King's return—State of Irish government and of the country—Recall of the lord lieutenant—King's visit to Hanover—Foundation of the Royal Society of Literature—State of Europe, particularly of Greece—Opening of parliament in 1822—Lord Wellesley governor of Ireland; state of the country, enactments of the legislature, &c.—Ravages of famine and disease in Ireland, &c.—Conduct of various classes—Agricultural distress in England—Admission of the Grenville party into the cabinet—Mr. Peel made secretary of state—Mr. Canning designated as governor-general of India—His motion to restore Roman catholic peers to their seats in parliament—Agricultural distress, and appointment of a committee—Bills founded on its report—Financial bills—State of parties—Acts for the reduction of expenditure forced on ministers, &c.—Mr. Western's motion on the currency—Relaxation of Peel's bill—Statistical affairs—Reduction in the salt-tax and in that on malt, &c.—Relaxation in the navigation and trade laws—Lord J. Russell's plan for parliamentary reform—Greek cause introduced into the house of commons—Favored by the people—Prorogation of parliament—The king's visit to Scotland—Death of lord Londonderry, &c.—Prevalence of bad principles—Trials of Carlile, &c., for blasphemous publications—Appointment of Mr. Canning as secretary of state—Congress of Verona, &c.—Greek cause—Affairs of Spain—Liberal views of Mr. Canning—Changes in the cabinet—Caledonian canal—Grant to publish the early histories of Britain.

PARLIAMENT, having assembled on the twenty-third of January, was opened by his majesty in person, with a speech characterised by the moderation of a crest-fallen man: in his references to domestic concerns, he expressed satisfaction at decreasing



Napoleon et le Général.

evils; and, in noticing foreign commotions, he stated, that his great object would be to preserve the blessings of peace to his people: he mentioned the queen, merely to suggest the settlement of a provision for her, in lieu of that, which, as princess of Wales, she lost at the demise of George III.

Notwithstanding these pacific demonstrations, opposition in each house prepared all its strength for a vigorous attempt to eject the ministers; who, it was imagined, had declined greatly in public favor by the line of conduct which they had adopted toward the queen: in pursuance of this scheme, the whigs did not disdain to co-operate with the radical party, her avowed adherents; and one of the results of this alliance was the presentation of numerous petitions, reprobating the late bill of pains and penalties, praying for the restoration of her majesty's name to the liturgy, and requesting the house to exert its utmost influence with the king to dismiss from his service those whose pernicious advice had endangered the dignity of the crown, and disturbed the tranquillity of the nation: the opposition leaders, however, had not taken into consideration that alarm which had been produced among the supporters of established order in the upper and middle classes, as soon as it was seen that the queen had suffered her cause to be identified with that of revolutionists; nor had they sufficiently estimated the sensible diminution of popular enthusiasm in her favor: when therefore they commenced offensive operations, they found themselves encountered and defeated by large majorities: the experiment was made in the lower house, on the twenty-sixth of January, by lord Archibald Hamilton, in a motion of censure on ministers for the omission of her majesty's name in the liturgy; being seconded by Mr. Hobhouse, one of the members for Westminster; while the legality, no less than the justice of such an omission, was disputed by those eminent lawyers, sir James Mackintosh, Mr. Scarlett, and Mr. Wetherell, who fortified their arguments with much historical and antiquarian research. In reply, the attorney and solicitor-general contended for the point of necessity, and also declared that it was not illegal; the former observing, that the act of uniformity gave a power to omit as well as to alter or change: as was evident from the fact, that the liturgy annexed to that act contains a blank in the place of the name of queen; which, without such vested power of addition or omission, could never have been supplied. The conduct of administration was strenuously defended by lord Castlereagh, as an act of imperative duty: he regretted that the law on this point was not

more clear ; but as the case stood, if they had at first inserted her majesty's name in the liturgy, while such heavy charges lay against her, and had been afterwards compelled to erase it on account of the confirmation of those charges, they would have been overwhelmed by the moral indignation of the country. ' But it was said,' continued his lordship, ' that the queen was proved innocent, and that her name should now be inserted as a matter of course : the opinion of gentlemen opposite on that point has not much weight with me, and I will tell them why ; because their conviction was as strong before the evidence was given as after. I will grant she was technically acquitted, and may claim the possession of those privileges to which she has strictly a legal right : but the insertion of her name in the liturgy is not a matter of right : and when her character has been so far affected by the evidence produced against her that 123 peers pronounced her guilty, the crown cannot be advised to grant this or any other favor which depends on its pleasure to be granted or withheld : toward the queen personally, I feel compassion ; but since they who affect to be her friends have renewed the discussion, be theirs the odium and the mischief which must ensue : I cannot however be silent on her conduct ; since she has been so infatuated as to deliver herself into the hands of a party who, I believe, entertain designs dangerous to public tranquillity and to the constitution ; nor can I honor her more in a political than in a moral point of view ; for has she not, in her answers to addresses, reviled the king, degraded the crown, and vilified both houses of parliament ? But, thank God ! the country is coming to its senses ; and if parliament persists in its tone of dignified resolution, the efforts of that party will end in despair. Your path of duty is plain : either sustain the actual government in unimpaired honor and character, or by a manly and tangible proceeding put an end to the present cabinet.'

Mr. Brougham, in reply to this speech, contended, that as the queen had been acquitted, she must be treated as if she had never been tried, or there was no justice left in England : he wished that gentlemen who thought variously on one point but agreed on others, would choose that on which they could unite, not that on which they differed : most of them thought the omission of the queen's name illegal ; some doubted its illegality : all however were clear as to its being inexpedient and ill-advised. Lord A. Hamilton's motion was met by the question of adjournment, which was carried by a majority of 101 votes in favor of ministers : a few days afterwards, on the

proposition of lord Castlereagh, for a committee to take into consideration a provision for the queen, Mr. Brougham brought down a message from her majesty, declaring, in respectful but positive terms, her unaltered determination to accept of no settlement while her name was excluded from the liturgy: not deterred however by this announcement, his lordship proposed to the house a provision of £50,000 per annum, as originally settled on her by the marriage treaty, and offered to her at St. Omers: after some vehement debates, the vote passed without a division, and a bill for this annuity was forwarded through the usual stages.

Lord Tavistock, on the fifth of February, renewed the attack, by a motion of direct censure on the whole proceedings against her majesty, with an expressed intention of driving ministers from power: he was seconded by Mr. Lambton, who charged them with gross inconsistency and mismanagement; but, after two nights spent in violent debate, the majority in favor of government was, on a division, increased to 146. The third and last effort made in the queen's cause was a motion from Mr. W. Smith, on the thirteenth, for the restoration of her name to the liturgy: Mr. Wilberforce, and some of his friends, who had previously voted with ministers, were disposed to concede this point, for the sake of allaying popular irritation: on a division, therefore, the majority was not so large; but it was decisively negatived; and the question was not resumed during this session, except as it offered means of some desultory hostilities to the opponents of government. In the mean time, the queen was soon reduced to the embarrassing alternative which her ill-judging counsellors had prepared for her; either to be left destitute of any provision, or to accept the proposed settlement, after having aggravated her humiliating situation by the affectation of a refusal: her acceptance of the grant was necessary for her very existence; but the inconsistency of this determination with her imprudent declaration extinguished all her influence over the public mind.

The question of illegality regarding the omission of the queen's name in the liturgy, having been disposed of in the commons, was renewed in the house of lords, on the second reading of a bill granting to her an annuity of £50,000; when the chancellor defended the legality of that omission in the most unqualified terms, professing that he had made himself master of all the information attainable on the subject, to which he had applied his utmost powers of research: the excitement, however, occasioned by these proceedings relating

to the queen, gave way to a more legitimate source of interest, arising from those of the holy alliance ; whose manifesto, published at Troppau, had excited feelings of indignation among all the friends of constitutional liberty throughout Europe. The intimate connexion which had long subsisted between our government and the courts of this despotic association, as well as the zeal with which ministers were accustomed to defend the arbitrary government of continental sovereigns, and the contempt which they too often displayed in debate for popular rights, created a suspicion in the country, that they had some secret connivance, if not participation, in the projects of the great northern confederacy : nor was this impression removed by a qualified protest against its principles of interference, addressed by lord Castlereagh to our ministers at foreign courts ; since it was thought, that the British government, although not called on to engage in a Quixotic defence of revolutions, ought to have exhibited a hearty reprobation of the tyrannical principles of the holy allies, as well as a positive expression of dissent from the measures by which those principles were carried into effect.

The consideration of foreign affairs was brought directly before parliament by motions from lord Grey in the upper, and sir James Mackintosh in the lower house ; the ostensible object of which, was the production of all communications between his majesty's government and foreign states, on the concerns of Naples ; but the real purpose was to elicit their sentiments from ministers, by an expression of vehement indignation against the confederates, and an exposition of the unjust partiality shown toward them by our cabinet ; which, while it affected to condemn, had, in fact, justified their principles, by refusing to acknowledge the constitutional government of Naples. In his speech on this occasion, lord Grey adverted strongly to a document which had appeared in a Hamburg paper in December last, purporting to be a circular of the allied powers : in this, no less a claim was set up than that of general superintendence over European states, and the suppression of all changes in their internal administration, if such should seem hostile to what the holy alliance deemed legitimate principles of government : those monarchs had, as it appeared to him, assumed the censorship of Europe ; sitting in judgment on the internal transactions of other states, and even taking on themselves to summon before them an independent sovereign, in order to pronounce sentence on a constitution which he had given to his country ; and threatening to enforce their judg-

ment by arms: this, he asserted, was to declare plainly, that all changes of government, which did not square with their ideas of propriety, were to be put down;—a principle, unknown before in the history of the world; than which nothing could be more unjust, nothing more atrocious. Ministers, in their defence, repeated the assurance, that our government was in no respect a party to the league; but the papers were refused, and the motions negatived: still the debates were productive of some good, since they conveyed to the world an expression of British feeling against the union of continental despots; and obliged a cabinet, which was too much disposed to support its policy, to loosen the bonds of their connexion.

When the declaration against Naples arrived, lord Lansdowne brought the subject again before the peers, by moving an address to his majesty for a remonstrance with the allied powers; but he was met by the pretext of a strict neutrality adopted by Great Britain. In the mean time, the Austrian army advanced: no measures, or at least only the most inefficient, had been taken by the constitutional government of Naples for the national defence: the troops left their ranks and fled, before they came into contact with the invaders; the wretched old king was re-established in all the privileges of despotism; and an Austrian army of occupation remained in the country, to rivet those fetters which its pusillanimous defenders may be said to have merited. At this crisis, the flame of insurrection had burst out in Piedmont; Milan and Venice were full of inflammable materials; and if the dastardly Neapolitans had done their duty, the glorious peninsula might perhaps have been delivered from foreign and domestic tyrants: but the speedy and lamentable catastrophe at Naples paralysed the efforts of braver men; and the ancient mistress of the world was doomed to remain a mournful subject of lamentation to the Italian Muses.

From the discussion of foreign oppression, parliament proceeded to a consideration of domestic grievances. The great advocate of catholic emancipation, Henry Grattan, had departed this life; but his mantle had descended on Mr. Plunkett, who brought forward that question on the twenty-eighth of February, prefacing it by an able and lucid speech, which elicited acclamations from all parties in the house: Mr. Peel appeared, on this occasion, as chief opponent of the measure; but the motion for a committee was carried by a majority of six votes: accordingly, the house resolved itself into a committee on the second of March; when six resolutions, proposed by Mr.

Plunkett, were acceded to ; and on these he framed two bills, one repealing disabilities, and the other enacting securities for the safety of the protestant succession to the crown, and of the protestant church. Mr. Canning supported the measure with great eloquence and fervor ; declaring, that ‘we were in the enjoyment of a peace, achieved in a great degree by catholic arms, and cemented by catholic blood.’ ‘For three centuries,’ he observed, ‘we had been erecting mounds, not to assist or improve, but to thwart nature : we had raised them high above the waters, where they have stood for many a year, frowning proud defiance on all who attempted to cross them : but in the course of ages, even they have been nearly broken down ; and the narrow isthmus, now formed by them, stands between two seas : the fountains see each other, and would fain meet. Shall we then fortify the mounds which are now almost in ruins ? or shall we leave them to moulder away by time or accident ? an event, which, though distant, must happen, and which, when it does, will only confer a thankless favor ; or shall we cut away at once the isthmus that remains, and float on the mingling waves the ark of our common constitution ?’

The two bills, when sent up to the house of lords, found its atmosphere not quite so congenial to their existence : the conduct of the first was undertaken by lord Donoughmore, who was strenuously opposed by the earl of Liverpool, and by the chancellor ; who expressed his belief that it would be impossible for the promoters of this measure to introduce any modifications of it, so as to gain his acquiescence, though he promised to bestow his best attention on the subject, before it could be discussed at a second reading. Lord Grenville answered the chancellor in a long and skilful speech ; but the fate of the measure was completely decided on the second day’s debate by the memorable speech, or protest, which the duke of York, presumptive heir to the throne, then delivered. ‘Educated,’ said his royal highness, ‘in the principles of the established church, the more I inquire, and the more I think, the more I am persuaded that her interests are inseparable from those of the constitution : I consider her as an integral part of that constitution ; and I pray that she may long remain so : at the same time, there is no man less an enemy to toleration than myself ; but I distinguish between the allowance of the free exercise of religion, and the granting of political power.’ This speech, embodying the sentiments of his late father, George III., carried the duke of York’s popularity

with the partisans of the high church to an extraordinary height: it became, as it were, engraven on their hearts, and was made the watchword of that party; while numerous copies of it, printed in letters of gold, were disseminated throughout the country. The bill was thrown out, after a long discussion, in which many of the peers took a part, by 159 votes against 120: twenty-seven bishops voted on the occasion, either personally or by proxy; but only two of the number, Dr. Bathurst of Norwich, and Dr. King of Rochester, were among the contents: the diminution of the usual majority in the lords on this question was attributed to the character of neutrality assumed by the cabinet, several leading members of which in both houses were found among the strenuous advocates of emancipation; though their colleagues as zealously resisted the abolition of existing restrictions.

While the peers were thus engaged, the commons were occupied in a sweeping motion for parliamentary reform, introduced by Mr. Lambton; who proposed to divide the kingdom into elective districts, extend the franchise to all householders, and limit the duration of parliaments to three years. The result of the debate, which was adjourned to a second evening, was a source of much merriment to the opposers of this measure; for, taking advantage of a thin house, and the absence of its supporters, they pressed a division at an early stage in the discussion; and when the mover entered to hear the debate, he was not a little surprised to find the question already disposed of. Another plan, characterised by an admirable spirit of moderation and prudence, was proposed by lord John Russell: this would have extended the right of electing members to populous towns, then unrepresented in parliament, and disfranchised every borough convicted hereafter of corruption: though supported by 124 voices, it was thrown out by a majority of 155; many of whom probably lived to regret the vote they gave that day. But though the rejection of every direct proposal for reform might, at first sight, appear to indicate no advance in favor of this important question; yet the increased strength of the minorities by which some of its modifications were supported, marked a growing conviction among men of moderate principles, that some concession to public opinion was necessary.

One decided measure of practical reform effected this session, was the disfranchisement of the corrupt borough of Grampound, and the transfer of its privileges to the large and populous county of York: the original purpose of lord John Russell,

who moved this question, was to confer its elective rights on the town of Leeds, and to invest the franchise in householders paying a rent of ten pounds: but this qualification savored too much of the democratic principle to satisfy a majority of the commons; and the bill passed their house, with the right of voting limited to renters of houses at twenty pounds per annum: even such a modification did not content the aristocratical jealousy of the peers; and every effort was made by lord Eldon and his party, unable as they were to glance into futurity, to defeat the measure altogether: lord Liverpool, however, effected a compromise, by proposing, as an amendment, to substitute the county of York for one of its towns; and the bill so altered, being returned to the commons, was passed. Mr. M. A. Taylor again took the field this session, on the subject of those arrears of business and delays in the court of chancery and house of lords, whence so much misery is produced; and his motion, negatived by only fifty-six against fifty-two, showed the state of public opinion on this point.

A continuation of low prices produced general distress, which was felt by no classes of the community so severely as those engaged in agricultural pursuits: numerous petitions on the subject having been presented at the beginning of this session, a committee was granted on the motion of Mr. Gooch; and its report was presented to the house on the eighteenth of June: this stated, 'that the complaints of the petitioners were founded in fact; in so far as they represented, that at the present price of corn, the returns to occupiers of arable land, after allowing for the interest of investments, were by no means adequate to the charges and outgoings: it also acknowledged, that the committee, after a long and anxious inquiry, had not been able to discover any means calculated immediately to relieve the present pressure.'

'So far,' the report stated, 'as the pressure arises from superabundant harvests, it is beyond the application of any legislative provision; so far as it is the result of the increased value of money, it is not one peculiar to the farmer, but extends to many other classes of society: that result, however, is the more severely felt by the tenant, in consequence of its coincidence with an overstocked market; especially, if he be farming with a borrowed capital, and under the engagements of a lease; and it has hitherto been farther aggravated by the comparative slowness, with which prices generally, and particularly the price of labor, accommodate themselves to a change in the value of money: from this last

circumstance, the departure from our ancient standard, in proportion as it was prejudicial to all creditors of money, and persons dependent on fixed incomes, was a benefit to the active capital of the country; and the same classes have been oppositely affected by a return to that standard: the restoration of it has also embarrassed the landowner, in proportion as his estate has been encumbered with mortgages, and other fixed payments, assigned on it, during the depreciation of the currency. The only alleviation for this evil is to be looked for in such a gradual reduction of the rate of interest below the legal maximum as may make such encumbrances a lighter burden on the landed interests; which reduction, if peace continues, there is every reason to hope for: the difficulties, in which the alterations of our currency have involved the farming, manufacturing, and trading interests of the country must diminish, in proportion as contracts, prices, and labor adjust themselves to the present value of money.'

This report, when made public, extinguished all hopes which had been entertained from the labors of the committee: the effects resulting from a suspension of cash payments, and an inundation of paper currency, in too many instances nominal, and easily obtained by speculators, were now becoming more and more evident; but no immediate remedy could be applied, no relief contemplated, except from the gradual progression of time, with economy and remission of taxation: ministers, however, notwithstanding the opposition of those who attributed the existing low prices to the influence of threatened changes in the currency, were firm in their purpose of effecting the resumption of cash-payments; and the bank directors, renouncing all ideas of self-interest, anticipated the period prescribed by law: they not only voluntarily opened their golden stores to the holders of their notes, but procured an act which hastened the removal of restriction by one year, making it imperative on the bank to pay all demands in cash, after the first of May, 1822.

The views of government on the question of free trade, proclaimed during last session, were now more formally developed in a series of resolutions, proposed by Mr. Wallace, vice-president of the board of trade: his object was to pave the way for a complete revisal of our navigation laws, and the removal of those restrictions which forbade the free interchange of commodities in foreign shipping; when, the general sentiment of the house being favorable to the measures contemplated, leave was given, notwithstanding opposi-

tion from particular interests, to introduce bills for their enactment in the ensuing session.

In the debates on the estimates of expenditure, Mr. Hume pursued a plan of sifting and disputing the required amount of almost every item of supply; and though he failed in all direct efforts to effect any reduction of expense; yet his system of perpetually harassing government forced ministers themselves into a necessity of originating measures of retrenchment: sometimes he was even gladly appealed to by them, when unable or unwilling to satisfy the cormorants that are constantly hovering round the treasury benches; creatures, whose lust of place and profit extinguishes all love of country and principles of liberty. The total amount of supplies for the year was £20,018,200; being less by above 1,000,000 than that for 1820: in aid of the ways and means, there were taken from the sinking fund £13,000,000; and the sum of £500,000 arose from the pecuniary indemnity paid by France. A proposition to repeal the malt tax was successfully resisted; but government, to prove its wish of relieving the agriculturists in some degree, removed the duty from horses employed in husbandry; when the labors of the session being finished, parliament was prorogued by commission on the eleventh of July.

This year the common lot of mortality overtook Napoleon Bonaparte, who died in the lonely isle of St. Helena on the fifth of May, and in the fifty-second year of his age: his spirit departed from its corporeal frame in the midst of a terrific storm of thunder and lightning; and it seemed as if the awful sounds brought up the confused image of a battle to the mind of the dying warrior; for his last broken words were '*tête d'armée,*' '*fiis,*' '*France!*' He was buried with the military honors due to a general of the first rank, in a grave fourteen feet deep; the lower part being chambered to receive the coffin: over this a large stone was placed, and the rest of the space was filled up with solid masonry fastened by iron clamps: very soon after his funeral ceremonies, the establishment, which had cost this country nearly half a million per annum, was broken up; and counts Bertrand and Montholon, with the rest of the late emperor's faithful adherents, returned to Europe: his will, bearing date the fourteenth of April, 1821, was brought over to England, and registered in the prerogative court of Canterbury, where it may at any time be seen. Thus terminated, in exile and in prison, the most extraordinary life yet known to political

history: the intelligence created very little sensation throughout Europe; and this was one of the remarkable contrasts in the chequered destiny of a man who once filled the world with his fame; and who had originated, or carried on, mighty transactions and revolutions, in which men of thought can see the springs of still greater changes.

The king's coronation had been originally fixed for the first of August, in the year now past; but the appearance of his consort put an end to that arrangement; and it had become a question much debated, whether the ceremony would take place in the present state of public feeling: but the pageantry of a coronation was too agreeable to the taste of George IV. to be declined; and as no people on earth are more easily worked on by the courtesy and condescension of their superiors than the English, the king and his ministers knew that there was no necessity for extraordinary exertions in order to turn the popular stream in his favor: his majesty therefore began to appear more frequently in public than his general custom was at this time; in particular, he visited the principal theatres; where he was received with acclamations so flattering, as almost to realise the assertion made by lord Castlereagh at the close of the late trial;—‘that in six months his majesty would be the most popular man within his dominions.’ The sentiments of the people therefore having been ascertained, a proclamation was issued, announcing the king's pleasure that his coronation should take place on the nineteenth of July: this, however, was a signal to bring the queen again into the field: ‘war to the knife!’ was the watchword of that determined and implacable woman.

In consequence of a memorial which she forwarded on the twenty-fifth of June, preferring her claim to be crowned like her royal predecessors, the case was argued, at the king's command, before his privy council: during two sittings, her majesty's rights were supported by Messrs. Brougham and Denman, whose chief argument rested on the plea of long and uniform practice. The king's attorney-general admitted that usage would be evidence of a right, unless it could be shown that such usage originated and was continued by the permission of another party: ‘there was evident distinction,’ he said, ‘between the coronation of a king, and that of a queen; the former being accompanied by important political acts, while the latter was a mere ceremony; but even the coronation of the king was not necessary to his possession of the crown: that act emanated from himself, and he had the

sole direction of it : the right assumed by the queen-consort was not once alluded to by any writer on our law and constitution ; and with respect to usage itself, the majority of instances since the reign of Henry VIII. was against the claim.' He might have added, that no queen-consort, from the time of William the Conqueror to the epoch just named, had been crowned at the same time with her husband. In fact, as lord Eldon observed, Mr. Brougham's argument before the privy council seemed, to most of its members, to prove the very reverse of her majesty's claim, as a right, demanding to be crowned with the king, on the same day and at the same place.¹ The solicitor-general followed in the same line of argument : Mr. Brougham replied : and the council, at its next sitting, unanimously rejected her majesty's claim of right.

As soon as the queen received this decision through her chamberlain, lord Hood, she wrote in her own name to lord Sidmouth, stating her fixed determination to be present at the ceremony, and demanding a suitable place to be provided for her accommodation ; when his lordship returned for answer, that it was not his majesty's pleasure to comply with this request, her application was renewed to the duke of Norfolk, as earl-marshal of England ; and subsequently to lord Howard of Effingham, to whom his grace had delegated the duties of his office : as lord Howard was obliged to take the commands of his majesty on this occasion, through the secretary of state, the answer returned was of course unsatisfactory ; and the disappointed queen finally addressed a letter to the archbishop of Canterbury, requesting his services to crown her majesty alone, the following week, while the Abbey remained in a state of preparation for that august ceremony, without the necessity of any additional expense to the nation. To this demand the following reply was instantly returned :—

Lambeth Palace, July 15.

'The archbishop of Canterbury has the honor to acknowledge, with all humility, the receipt of her majesty's communication : her majesty is undoubtedly aware that the archbishop cannot stir a single step in the subject-matter of it without the commands of the king.'

Thus repulsed in her application to different authorities, nothing remained for the queen but to prepare a protest ; which was accordingly drawn up in the most pointed terms, and which she determined to deliver personally into his majesty's hands on the day of his coronation. The publication of this

¹ See his Life, vol. ii. p. 420.

document, as well as other acts, exhibiting her fixed resolution, under all hazards and circumstances, to be present at the ceremony, occasioned expectations that its celebration would be interrupted, if not prevented, by some popular commotion or infraction of the public peace: accordingly, when the day for this superb ceremony, which had not been witnessed for sixty years, arrived, the respectable part of the community mustered in very small numbers; the immense booths, constructed at a great expense by speculators for the accommodation of the public, were almost deserted; and places, for which, if no apprehensions had existed, ten guineas would have been demanded, and cheerfully given, fell to five shillings, and even to half-a-crown: ministers, however, put in practice every possible precaution to preserve tranquillity, and to baffle the designs of their antagonist: they got up shows, balloons, fireworks, and all sorts of entertainments to attract the populace from the vicinity of the Abbey; while, in case the people should stir in the queen's favor every disposable regiment was brought into, or near, the metropolis on that day; and the streets were so barricaded, that none but soldiers on duty could move conveniently along them: but there needed none of this warlike preparation; so much was popular enthusiasm in the queen's cause abated.

On the preceding evening, the king slept at the speaker's house in Palace-yard; and on the morning of the nineteenth, while arrangements were making in Westminster-hall for the grand procession, her majesty, faithful to her word, came down to the scene of action in her state carriage, drawn by six bay horses, followed by another carriage with her attendants; and, arriving at the outer gates of the hall, she claimed a right to be present at the ceremony: being, however, very unceremoniously excluded, she attempted to gain admission at several doors of the Abbey, but without any better success: some of the people then pointed out to her majesty an opening to the platform, which she ascended; and, walking thence to Old Palace-yard, entered first the passage to Cotton-garden, and subsequently advanced along the covered way to Poets'-corner: at this last door lord Hood desired admission; but the door-keepers drew across the entrance, and requested to see the tickets: his lordship then said, 'I present to you your queen; surely it is not necessary for her to have a ticket:' but one of the attendants replied, that he did not know the queen, and prohibited her majesty from entering. Lord Hood produced his own ticket, but was informed that it would only admit one person: her majesty, therefore, finding every effort to obtain

admission ineffectual, returned to her carriage, and proceeded through Whitehall, Pall Mall, and St. James's-street, to her own residence, attended by a concourse of rabble, whose cheers and acclamations saluted her ears for the last time: on her arrival at home, she also addressed her last letter to the king through lord Sidmouth, requesting that he would be pleased to give an early answer to the demand which she had made to the archbishop of Canterbury; and trusting, 'that, after the public insult she had received, he would grant her just right of being crowned on the following Monday.' To this, lord Sidmouth replied, that he was commanded to acquaint her majesty, that, in accordance with the decision of the privy council against the right of queens-consort to be crowned at any time, the king did not think proper to give orders for her majesty's coronation.

During the period in which the above transactions took place without the hall, considerable anxiety was manifested by the illustrious assemblage within, as the mingled uproar of applause and disapprobation reached their ears: happily however this was at an end before the procession was marshalled; and at eleven o'clock, the splendid train set out in the usual order: the anthem of 'O Lord, grant the king a long life,' being sung in parts, in succession with the performance of his majesty's band, the sound of trumpets, and the beat of drums, until it arrived at the Abbey. This display of the most magnificent among the old pomps of England has been commemorated by a celebrated master of description,² who has declared, 'that a ceremony more august and imposing in all its parts, or more calculated to make the deepest impression both on the eye and on the feelings, cannot be conceived.' Pitying those who, 'being unable to detect a peg on which to hang a laugh, sneer coldly at this solemn festival, and are rather disposed to dwell on the expense which attends it, than on the generous feelings which it ought to awaken,' he very justly observes, 'that the expense, so far as it is national or personal, goes directly and instantly to the encouragement of the British manufacturer and mechanic; that it operates as a tax on wealth and consideration, for the benefit of poverty and industry; a tax, willingly paid by the one class; and not less acceptable to the other, because it adds a happy holiday to the monotony of a life of labor.'

Notwithstanding this great authority, however, it may confidently be predicted, that no coronation will again be attempted in this kingdom, on the same scale, and in the same style, as that of George IV. Times change, and we must change with

² Sir Walter Scott, in his Letter on the Coronation.

them, notwithstanding the pain which this may cause to the lovers of antiquity ; mere gaudy processions have had their day ; the seasons for which they were suited, when intellectual and refined amusements were unknown, have passed away, and vain ceremonies must vanish in their train. When sir Walter Scott, within the sacred walls of the Abbey, witnessed with those heartfelt emotions, which he has so eloquently described, the voluntary and solemn interchange of vows betwixt the king and his assembled people, while *he* called on God to witness his resolution to maintain their laws and privileges, and *they* to bear witness that they accepted him as their liege sovereign, we can readily enter into his feelings, and applaud the scene : also we acknowledge the justness of his description, when he calls lord Londonderry, in the magnificent robes of the garter, with his cap and high plume, his fine face and majestic person, an adequate representative of the order of Edward III. : in a similar spirit, we allow that the duke of Wellington, with all his laurels, moved and looked as one deserving the baton, which was never grasped by a worthier hand : but when majesty itself came tottering along the platform between the Abbey and the hall, scarcely able to support the glittering diadem that formed a melancholy contrast with his faded and enfeebled frame ; when the high-spirited representative of the grand order of England, and the immortal conqueror of Napoleon, marching amidst a motley crew of antique maskers, paraded their ribbons and their laurels, their stars, garters, and plumes, before a gaping crowd, of what has been humorously termed ‘the great unwashed ;’ it was then extensively felt that a downward step had been taken ‘from the sublime to the ridiculous :’ and why so ?—because there was a want of unison between the parties. In ancient times, these decorated figures in procession would have been regarded with silent awe, or accompanied with murmurs of respectful and sincere applause : in the present instance, they were received with laughter ; and the highest nobles of our land became subjected to the gibes and jeers of apprentice boys, and the lowest of the mob.³ On a subsequent occasion, better taste was shown : the procession which accompanied William IV. to the Abbey, was a military array :

³ These absurd pageantries are worthy only of contempt ; but how shall we designate that base act of adulation committed by the University of Oxford, dispensing with a whole term of academical residence in honor of George the Fourth’s accession to the crown ! *remitting* to her students so large a portion of their course of studies ; as if those studies were a punishment inflicted on her sons !

the fine and affecting part of the ceremony was preserved : the trumpery was discarded.

The ill-fated queen, who had placed her last stake on the hazard of a day, and, having totally failed in her object, had incurred derision even from the populace, sank under this deep humiliation : she was soon afterwards attacked with an obstruction of the bowels, which, in her state of mind and body, brought on mortification, and terminated fatally the seventh of August : but even in death, the unconquerable will and ruling passion still remained : she ordered that her remains should not be left in England, but carried to her native land ; and that the inscription on her tomb should be,—‘ Here lies Caroline of Brunswick, the injured queen of England.’

Before the unexpected event of her majesty’s decease took place, the king had made arrangements to visit Ireland, and it was not thought proper to interrupt them : on Saturday, the eleventh of August, his majesty embarked on board the Lightning steam-packet, and on the following afternoon disembarked at Howth : being quickly recognised, he was welcomed by the warm-hearted inhabitants—who for so many years had never seen a king on their shore in the garb of peace—with a delirium of joy : nor was the homage he received less gratifying to the monarch because it was unthinking and abject : he cordially acknowledged the greeting of the multitude, shaking hands with many, and appearing to enjoy the humor of the moment in the absence of etiquette. The populace escorted him to the steps of the vice-regal lodge, whence he addressed them in very energetic language :—‘ this,’ said his majesty, ‘ is one of the happiest days of my life : I have long wished to visit you : my heart has always been Irish : from the day it first beat, I have loved Ireland ; and this day has shown me that I am beloved by my Irish subjects : rank, station, honors, are nothing ; but to feel that I live in the hearts of my Irish subjects, is to me the most exalted happiness.’ The public authorities were presented at a private levee on the fifteenth ; and the great seemed to participate in the rapture of the lower orders, on the arrival of a sovereign whose affability delighted them : the most extravagant hopes of national and individual benefit from this visit were entertained by all ranks ; while the more sage and politic counsellors who accompanied their sovereign, began to feel much anxiety, and to exert peculiar vigilance, lest his feelings should hurry him into expressions which discretion might lament. The king’s public entry into Dublin occurred on the seventeenth,

when his majesty wore the riband of the order of St. Patrick, and took possession of the castle for the remainder of his stay : on the twenty-third, he dined with the lord mayor ; but his chief, if not only private visit, was to Slane castle, the residence of lord Conyngham : in the course of the evening which he spent there, despatches were received, announcing the riots at the funeral procession of the queen ; and he is said to have expressed, in somewhat contemptuous terms, his dissatisfaction at the want of arrangement and energy on the part of ministers ; between whom and his majesty a want of cordiality had for some time existed ; owing, as was supposed, to the intrigues of the marchioness of Conyngham in favor of the whig party. The following are the circumstances which led to the present disapprobation : her majesty's body, according to her will, was to be carried to Brunswick for interment ; and the first stage, toward Harwich, where it was to cross the sea, was to Romford in Essex : now the road to that place from Brandenburg-house led through the heart of the capital, by her husband's palace, and St. Paul's cathedral : ministers, therefore, in their anxiety to prevent the corpse from proceeding in such a direction, endeavoured to force it up a narrow street or lane, so that it might reach the northern outskirts of London, and thus get into the Romford road, without occasioning any popular commotion ; to effect which, a sufficient number of troops was placed at the command of those who had the conduct of this affair : but the people, by tearing up the pavement, making trenches in the road, and blocking up all other avenues, actually obliged the funeral procession to take the forbidden route : a conflict at the upper gate of Hyde-park took place between the military and the people, when two of the latter were shot dead by the soldiers ; the procession moved on, and the contest was renewed ; but the mob eventually triumphed ; and the hearse, after having been driven up and down various streets like an artillery-waggon, with the most unseemly velocity, was forced into the city, where the lord mayor and other authorities joined the procession ; the shops being closed, and the bells of the different churches tolling. In the course of the affray, sir Robert Wilson remonstrated with some soldiers and an officer on duty ; and his humane but unmilitary interference subsequently deprived him of his commission : the directing civil magistrate, also, who consulted humanity in preference to his orders, and for the prevention of bloodshed yielded to the desire of the multitude, was dismissed from his office. Such were the commotions, and such the cause of them, in the

British metropolis, while the king was enjoying the pleasures of Irish conviviality, and acquiring an ascendancy over party-spirit in that ill-used and misgoverned country : this, if he had resolved at once to adopt a liberal and decisive policy, might have preserved his image stamped as a benefactor on the very heart of the nation : but contenting himself with a proclamation exhorting the people to concord, and with a reiteration of the plaudits which had greeted his arrival, George IV. departed on the seventh of September, and, disembarking on the thirteenth at Milford Haven, proceeded immediately to London.

At this time lord Talbot was chief governor of Ireland ; a nobleman much esteemed for his private character, but with no recommendation for so high an office beyond his known sentiments, favorable to an exclusive protestant ascendancy : his secretary was Mr. Charles Grant, a man of deep religious feeling, liberal principles, and fine talents ; whose appointment seemed a pledge to the great majority of the people for a concession of privileges : but a government, administered on this miserable system of counteraction, was peculiarly inapplicable to Ireland, and soon produced its natural effects in that distracted country : all expectations formed from the king's visit were fatally disappointed ; the excitement of the period soon subsided ; and the sanguine people, experiencing no immediate good from his majesty's presence, agreed to attribute many of their existing evils to that cause. Poverty and misery awakened discontent and lawless violence : flames were kindled, and the most diabolical outrages perpetrated ; while religious discord inflamed the wounds of political animosity : executions, imprisonments, and a military occupation of several counties were unavailing to repress tumults, or to prevent the dreadful conflagrations and sanguinary struggles to which they gave origin : the lord-lieutenant was recalled ; a special commission was sent into the disturbed districts ; and exemplary punishments were employed to terrify those whom authority could not restrain.

His majesty had scarcely returned from Ireland before he encountered the fatigues of another expedition. Having embarked, on the twentieth of September, at Gravesend, he landed at Calais ; and, travelling through Lisle, Brussels, Osnaburg, and Nieuburg, entered the capital of his Hanoverian dominions on the eleventh of October, under a salute of 101 guns : accompanied by his royal brothers, the dukes of Cumberland and Cambridge, he spent ten days in that ancient city, where he accommodated himself strictly to the manners

of the people, speaking German, and wearing the Guelphic order; reviewing the military, and receiving civic deputations; visiting the university of Gottingen, and joining in a grand hunting party at Diester. Having undergone the ceremony of another coronation, he departed from this portion of his dominions, leaving behind him lively impressions of his private affability and condescension, where he had publicly established for himself the proudest of all titles—that of a patriot king.

We must not omit to mention a striking instance of his majesty's liberality and attention to the interests of learning, which he this year exhibited in the foundation of the Royal Society of Literature; not only conferring on that institution the distinction of a charter, but the more solid advantage of £1000 per annum for pensions to ten honorary members: premiums also were founded for the encouragement of compositions in prose and verse; and the society, whose records already contain a large mass of valuable information, boasts many of the most illustrious names in the literary world among its associates and contributors.

Though the members of the holy alliance had totally suppressed Neapolitan revolutions, the new order of things continued in Spain, because the royal confederates were unable to reach the seat of the disease, and stifle its progress, without the active co-operation of France, and the sufferance of Great Britain: the system itself, however, had but little claim to respect, being neither a monarchy nor a republic; and the consequence of so defective a state of administration soon became visible. In May, the Cortes of Portugal opened their session; and in July, the king, returning from Brazil, accepted, and swore to maintain, the constitution: in essential points the plan of government coincided with that of Spain; but in some particulars it circumscribed the royal authority still more. In northern Europe, the Russian autocrat, bent on extending his power, and not content with the large territories which he possessed in two quarters of the world, determined to push forward his dominions into a third. By an ukase of September the sixteenth, Russia appropriated to herself the north-west coast of America, from Beering's Straits to 51° north latitude, and the Kurile isles, as far as Urup, 45° north latitude; prohibiting foreign navigation in the vicinity, as well as on the coast. But the most important feature in foreign politics was the insurrection in Greece, the first step to independence in that interesting state; which, if properly settled and enlarged, might be made as important a barrier to Europe against the

advance of Russian hordes, as unhappy Poland once offered against the Turks.

For ages past, the miserable Greeks, trodden under foot by their merciless oppressors, had looked up to European states, but looked in vain, for liberty : at length, after many instances of delusive hopes held out, which only plunged them deeper into calamity, they made the important discovery, that they who would be free, themselves must strike the blow : accordingly, at the conclusion of the late war, this energetic nation, which expected that the congress of Vienna would work a change in its affairs, finding these hopes disappointed, resolved to take measures for emancipating itself : in consequence, a secret society, called the Hetæria, the origin of which is involved in considerable mystery, assumed a more decidedly political character, extending its ramifications through the various districts of European Turkey : it soon included men of the greatest note in all those quarters ; but was embraced by no persons with greater enthusiasm than by Greek soldiers of fortune, in the pay of England, France, and Russia ; who, when disbanded, bore with extreme impatience a renewed subjection to Turkish despotism, and were ready to throw themselves into the arms of any party which spoke to them of vengeance. Reflecting on the Greek character, we should wonder how this extensive conspiracy could have remained so long concealed, did we not know that the stupidity of the Moslems in such matters was fully equal to the levity of their helots : nevertheless, the projects of the Hetærists were several times in great peril ; and never more so than in the summer of 1818 ; when, not only their secret, but the whole plan of the Greek revolution was revealed to captain W. H. Smyth, R.N.,⁴

⁴ See Marshal's Naval Biography, vol. v. p. 154. It would be wrong to pass over the name of this distinguished officer without setting forth his example as an encouragement for others to honorable and persevering exertions in their profession. Captain Smyth, who had passed through a most laborious and brilliant career during the late war, was left, at its close, a lieutenant, without interest or any other prospect of advancement, except in the resources of a vigorous, intelligent mind, highly adapted to scientific pursuits ; knowing therefore how imperfect were the surveys which had hitherto been made of the coasts of the Mediterranean, he procured a Sicilian gun-boat, and carried on very extensive hydrographical operations, connecting Barbary, Sicily, and Italy, intirely on his own means, and without any official instructions. His labors however did not escape notice ; and when submitted to the Admiralty, created such admiration, that before the close of 1815 he was advanced to the rank of commander ; and it was determined to engrave

who considered himself in duty bound to disclose it to our government, through sir Thomas Maitland, then governor of the Ionian islands: they escaped, however, this, as well as other imminent dangers; and, fortunately for the Greeks, their cause excited a favorable interest in some of the cabinets, and in all the nations of Europe, which preserved them from such interference as had been exhibited at Naples, and was preparing against Spain: their only virulent opponents were the Castlereagh party in England, and the cabinet of Vienna; but the former was soon paralysed by the death of its leader, and the expression of public feeling; though 'the Austrians,' as I have elsewhere observed, 'appear, throughout the whole contest, both publicly and privately, to have done all in their power to increase the evils of suffering christians, to stifle the spirit of liberty in its birth, and to amalgamate their own cause with that of ruthless Mussulmen, impalers of mankind.'⁵

As the disturbed state of Ireland was now the most prominent object of public interest, it formed the principal topic of his majesty's speech at the opening of parliament, on the fifth of February. On a principle of political conciliation, the marquis Wellesley had already been appointed lord-lieutenant of that country; and the attorney-general Saurin, the champion of the Orange party, was removed to make way for Mr. Plunkett, that eloquent advocate of catholic emancipation. From the high character of the chief governor, great expectations were formed; but the evils of the old system were too firmly rooted in the soil to be suddenly eradicated: the plan of counteraction was still suffered to exist in the appointment of Mr. Goulburn, as Irish secretary; and while the disabilities of so large a majority of the population remained, all endeavors to conciliate

the most important portion of his surveys: accordingly, his *Atlas of Sicily*, with an accompanying memoir, has been published, and extensively circulated, not only in England, but in most other European nations. Captain Smyth subsequently accompanied lord Exmouth to Algiers, and was engaged in curious researches on the northern shores of Africa, relating to their antiquities, as well as to subjects of a political nature: he was also much employed by sir Thomas Maitland and sir Frederick Adam in the affairs of the Ionian islands; and returned home with an honorable fame, which he has increased by continued exertions in the cause of science, as well as of his peculiar profession; building an observatory at his own house in Bedford, and making observations which have established his character as one of the first practical astronomers of the age. He was made post-captain in 1824, and is president of the Astronomical Society.

⁵ *Travels in Sicily, Greece, and Albania*, 8vo. edit. vol. ii. p. 209.

and impartially control both parties, only irritated that which government had usually favored, without satisfying the expectations of the other. To repress the spirit of lawless outrage, which was desolating this unhappy portion of the empire, the marquis of Londonderry, who had succeeded to the title at his father's death, introduced and carried two bills for arming the Irish administration with additional powers ;—the insurrection act, and the suspension of the *habeas corpus* : several members of opposition, among whom lord Lansdowne, sir John Newport, and Mr. Hume were conspicuous, attempted, during the session, to induce parliament to inquire into the state of Ireland, but without success ; and, notwithstanding the new powers granted to the executive arm, and the energy with which they were exerted, dreadful scenes of nocturnal outrage continued unabated, until the districts in which they chiefly occurred were visited by the still more frightful scourges of famine and disease.

In the preceding year, the potatoe crop, on which the Irish peasantry almost wholly depended, had been very deficient ; and this deficiency began to be severely felt after the disturbed state of the country had suspended the operations of industry, and deprived the working people of employment : while corn, therefore, and the better sorts of food were plentiful, the poorer classes were unable to procure sustenance of any kind, and were literally starving in the midst of abundance : the aggravated horrors of this misery soon produced a fever of the typhus kind, which, spreading rapidly among the wretched cabins of the country, carried off their inhabitants by thousands. The conduct of government was prompt and benevolent : £500,000 were instantly placed at the disposal of lord Wellesley, to be dispensed in charitable relief, or in employing the people on works of public utility : a still more effectual aid was supplied by the generosity of the British nation ; subscriptions for the relief of their suffering brethren in Ireland being opened in almost every town, and collections made in churches and other places of public worship : under the management of a central committee in London, these contributions of christian charity were applied extensively to the relief of those who must otherwise have perished. Among the numerous instances of indefatigable exertion exhibited by the superior classes in Ireland, that of the archbishop of Tuam was above all praise ; the conduct of the primate also was noble ; but the scanty contributions of the great absentee landholders occasioned great and merited animadversion at the time, and was brought forward

as no contemptible argument for establishing a system of poor laws, suited to the condition of the Irish people.

At the commencement of this year, the commerce and manufactures of Great Britain manifested a visible improvement; but the continued distress of the agriculturists, whose interests appeared to be still farther depressed by an unexampled fall in prices through seasons of abundant produce, led to some modifications in the state of political parties: at many county meetings previous to the present session of parliament, both landholders and farmers had loudly expressed their complaints; and the country gentlemen generally took such a part in this question, by uniting with whigs and reformers in a call for retrenchment and remission of taxation, that the treasury bench began to feel alarm: this drove them to the expedient of strengthening their ranks by opening the doors of office to the Grenville party; which, though not united with the whigs, was generally opposed to ministers: nor did it require much tact or delicacy to throw the bait before those eager aspirants after place and pension:⁶ As lord Grenville, the political head of the party, had retired from public life, the marquis of Buckingham was gratified by a ducal coronet; and Mr. Charles Wynne was made president of the board of control: but a far greater accession of strength, because of talent, was gained in the exchange of lord Sidmouth for Mr. Peel, as secretary of state for the home department: his lordship however was permitted to retain his seat in the cabinet, shut for the present against Mr. Canning, whose part in the late proceedings respecting the queen had created feelings of resentment in the king's mind; and whose general principles of policy were the aversion of him who held the king's conscience in his keeping: but the eminent services, rendered by this gentleman to the East India company, as president of the board of control, and the high opinion which they entertained of his character, induced them to confer on him the appointment of governor-general: the regret however which Mr. Canning felt at losing the opportunity to serve his country in the manner most gratifying to himself, and in a station better suited to the display of his talents and principles, was scarcely soothed even by the brilliant prospect of fame and fortune held out to him in another hemisphere, where the destinies of eighty millions of

⁶ 'All articles,' said lord Holland on this occasion, 'are to be had at low prices, except Grenvilles.' Their accession was looked upon with a jealous eye by the ministerial section attached to the lord chancellor, whose anti-catholic fears were much excited.

human beings would depend on his administration : even to the last, he continued in a disturbed state of mind on this subject ; and the vacillation of his feelings was strikingly displayed in a farewell speech to his constituents at Liverpool. Wishing perhaps to give *éclat* to his departure from the scene of his glory, he, on the thirtieth of April, moved in the house of commons for leave to bring in a bill for restoring the right of sitting and voting in parliament to Roman catholic peers :⁷ his speech on this occasion was a splendid combination of genius and taste ; and hard as was the task for one who had spoken so often and so well on this subject, to find new sources of eloquence, the accomplished orator did not yield to the difficulty of his situation : seizing happily on the ceremony of the late coronation, he asked ;—‘ Do you imagine it never occurred to the representatives of Europe then contemplating this imposing spectacle, that it never occurred to the ambassadors of catholic Austria, of catholic France, or of states more bigoted, if there be any more bigoted, to the catholic religion, to reflect, that the moment this solemn ceremony was over, the duke of Norfolk would become disseized of the exercise of his privileges among his fellow peers ? stripped of his robes of office, which were to be laid aside, and hung up, until the distant (be it a very distant !) day, when the coronation of a successor to his present most gracious sovereign should again call him forth to assist at a similar solemnisation ? Thus, after being exhibited to the peers and people of England, to the representatives of princes and nations of the world,—the duke of Norfolk, highest in rank among our peers—the lord Clifford, and other like him, representing a long line of illustrious and heroic ancestors,—appeared as if they had been called forth and furnished for the occasion, like the lustres and banners that flamed and glittered in the scene ; and were to be, like them, thrown by as useless and temporary formalities : they might indeed bend the knee, and kiss the hand ; they might bear the train, or rear the canopy ; they might perform the offices assigned by Roman pride to their barbarian forefathers, —*Purpurea tollant aulœa Britanni* : but with the pageantry of the hour, their importance faded away : as their distinction vanished, their humiliation returned ; and he who headed the procession of peers to-day, could not sit among them, as their equal on the morrow.’

⁷ Lord Eldon, on this occasion, observed upon Canning’s plea—that the peers should be first restored, because they were last excluded—‘ the *papist king* was the *last* excluded.’

He was strongly opposed by Mr. Peel; who professed himself unable to see any reason for exempting Roman catholic peers from political restrictions, to which a whole community, professing the same religious tenets, were by law subject. Mr. Wetherell was against partial concessions: if this bill passed, commoners would naturally expect to be admitted next year into parliament, without restrictions; he would rather deal with the measure *in toto* than in this mutilated form; it however passed the commons by a majority of five, but was rejected on the second reading in the upper house; where it was introduced by the duke of Portland, and vigorously opposed by the lord chancellor, who declared that this bill demanded nothing more nor less than unlimited concession to the Roman catholics. 'Give them this,' said he, 'and you can hereafter resist nothing which you ought to resist.'

As the small corps of Grenvillites, which had joined their ranks, could not support ministers if deserted by the country gentlemen, it became necessary to take steps for conciliating the landed interests, which were at this time pressed on their notice by frequent petitions to both houses: when Mr. Brougham, therefore, in order to try the temper of parties, moved, early in the session, that it was the duty of the house to relieve agricultural distress by a reduction of taxes, lord Londonderry met this covert attack on ministers with an assurance that they intended to propose measures for that purpose; and as by this pledge he prevailed on the country gentlemen to afford him their usual support, the motion was negatived. Aware that the cause of distress was not to be remedied by legislative enactments, but feeling the necessity of throwing out a tub to the whale, his lordship soon afterwards proposed the re-appointment of the agricultural committee; and, on receiving its report, submitted to the house a plan of relief; the principal heads of which were, a repeal of the annual malt duty, and a loan of £1,000,000 in exchequer bills to the landed interest, on the security of warehoused corn; it was also enacted, that, when wheat should reach the price of eighty shillings a quarter, at which foreign produce became importable under the existing law, a new scale of duties should be brought into permanent operation. The chancellor of the exchequer, at the same time, brought forward two financial operations: the first was a reduction of the navy five per cents. to stock carrying only four per cent.; the holders having the option of being paid off at par, or of accepting the lower rate of interest, with a small increase of capital as a bonus;

£140,000,000 of stock were thus commuted, which effected a saving to the public of more than £1,200,000 per annum: the second was a plan to diminish the present charge for naval and military half-pay and civil pensions, known in financial jargon under the name of the dead weight; by extending it in the form of annuities over a period of forty-five years, instead of allowing it to be gradually extinguished through the death of annuitants. The whole project was like the expedient of a spendthrift, to obtain a little present relief at a ruinous but future cost; and it could only be effected by inducing some great monied corporation to contract for payment of the amount of pensions until their gradual expiration, for a certain fixed annuity: the scheme appeared fallacious to many members, and unintelligible to others; nevertheless, it was passed by the house: but the great capitalists were not so readily convinced; the chancellor of the exchequer was obliged to re-model his plan; and the arrangement was completed in the following year by a bargain with the Bank of England.

When the estimates of expenditure for the year came under consideration, ministers felt themselves obliged to yield in many instances to the expressed wishes of the house: early in this session, the opposition had been defeated by a small majority of four only, in a motion to repeal the salt duty; and being now encouraged by the co-operation of many among the landed proprietors, they commenced a series of attacks on the cabinet, and forced several of its outposts: thus, a motion by sir M. W. Ridley, for the reduction of two out of seven lords of the admiralty, was carried against ministers by a large majority; and a second defeat was inflicted on them by lord Normanby, who proposed an address to the throne for dismissing one of the two postmasters-general. Encouraged by this success, the opposition now determined to assail one of the strongest works in the citadel of corruption, the diplomatic expenditure of the country: here, however, lord Londonderry took his stand; declaring, that if the house persisted in going into a committee on that subject, it would be the signal for breaking up the administration: this menace had the desired effect of dividing the enemy's forces; the country gentlemen, though anxious for retrenchment, and irritated against ministers, were not willing to push their antagonists into office: so that the motions for inquiry were rejected by very large majorities.

In the present unexampled state of agricultural distress, Mr. Western brought forward a motion on the subject of our currency, the alteration of which he assigned as the chief cause

of the calamity; since it operated injuriously on all classes except the fundholder and annuitant, and by its ruinous effects on private contracts, as well as public payments, was calculated to endanger property of every description: he felt surprised that the country had so long viewed with indifference an advance of ten, fifteen, or twenty per cent. on our unparalleled taxation; most of which, as well as a large proportion of the debt, had arisen under a depreciated currency; and he concluded, by moving for a committee to inquire into the effect which the act of 1819, for resumption of cash payments by the bank, had produced on our manufacturing and commercial interests. After Mr. Huskisson had replied at considerable length to the honorable member's propositions, and insisted particularly on the danger of taking so fluctuating an article as corn for a standard of the circulating medium, he moved as an amendment, 'that this house will not in any way alter the standard of gold and silver;' the debate was then adjourned to the following day, when Mr. Grey Bennet argued in favor of the motion, hoping that the principle of an equitable adjustment might be discovered. Mr. Ricardo trusted, that no step would be taken to affect the existing law concerning cash payments: he admitted that great difficulties had resulted from the efforts made to return to sound principles, and he was not sorry that they had arisen; they would prevent that house from again having recourse to measures which so seriously affected the currency: after several other members had delivered their opinions on this important topic, Mr. secretary Peel rose, and said, 'that he would not enter on the discussion of abstract subjects: from the reasonings of gentlemen, down to the speech of the honorable member for Westminster, he was at a loss to guess the objects of the committee: the honorable baronet fairly stated, that the real object of the motion was to repeal the bill of 1819: he had declared, that the aim of the honorable gentleman (Mr. Western) was to establish a new standard of value, and to reduce the value of one pound to fourteen shillings; but the house, he hoped, would pause before they adopted a proposition for reducing the value of our currency by one-third. An honorable gentleman had talked of establishing and securing the foundations of public prosperity; but what would be the consequence to-morrow, if that night they adopted his proposition? men of common sense would buy up every guinea in the country; the whole of our mercantile transactions would be disturbed, and all private contracts be open to inquiry and defeat. Seven or eight years had already

elapsed since the house pledged itself to return to the ancient standard of value: in 1814, the house came to a resolution, that the Bank of England ought to return to cash payments: in 1816, when his right honorable friend proposed a resolution on the subject, the late Mr. Horner would not consent, until an express declaration was made, that the legislature would see that cash payments should soon be resumed; and his proposition was accordingly adopted: but the restriction was continued, to enable the bank to resume cash payments with greater convenience; so that since 1814, the country was accommodating itself to this new state of things; and after having accomplished that object, the house was told that the intent of the honorable gentleman's motion was, to reduce the value of money from twenty to fourteen shillings. With respect to the situation of the public creditor, he had been paid in a depreciated currency: the public creditor lent his money in 1798 and 1800, on the understanding, that when the bank restriction should expire, he would be intitled to his demand in the ancient standard of value; if the house, therefore, were to come to any adjustment of the nature proposed, undoubtedly the creditor would have a right, and would demand the full payment of his debt. It should be recollected, that a great number of persons held debentures who were not the original purchasers, but had bought them for a full and valuable consideration: could the government turn round to those persons, and say:—the original holder gave for this debenture only eighty pounds; you gave ninety-five pounds; but we will not pay you more than eighty pounds? He (Mr. Peel) would say, that if the house were to proceed on this principle, there would be an end for ever to the very idea of national faith;—that faith, which had carried us through every difficulty, and which constituted the pride, the glory, and the support of this country.'

But although parliament wisely determined not to interfere with our currency, the fall of prices at this time became so alarming to all classes who suffered by the ruin of agriculturists, and bankruptcies in consequence became so numerous, that ministers felt obliged to relax in their grand measure, and give the nation a little more breathing time to recover itself. Peel's bill had provided, that the issue of one or two pound notes, whether by the Bank of England, or by provincial firms, should cease in May 1823; a precaution necessary to guard the bank against a constant drain of its gold for exportation; and which it never could have supplied, if every private banker had been permitted to circulate small notes at pleasure, and

lower the value of the currency : ministers, however, had come to the resolution of repealing that part of the bill of 1819, which confined the issue of small notes to the period of 1823 ; and an act in consequence was introduced into parliament and carried this session, by which the privilege of issuing such notes was extended for ten years more, till January 1833.⁸ The bank had good reason for complaining of this measure ; since its directors had accumulated a very large stock of gold, and now found the treasure thrown on their hands, and of little use, except to be disposed of at a less price than it cost : but with the above-mentioned change, symptoms of returning prosperity appeared in the nation : country bankers now increased their issues of paper ; and, as farmers obtained a higher price for their produce, rents advanced, trade profited by the home market, and the whole country, before the period of 1825, had assumed so smiling, though illusory an appearance, that the chancellor of the exchequer, at the opening of his budget, took occasion to congratulate the house on that extraordinary degree of prosperity before them, to which he could see no assignable limit : the interesting and important nature however of this subject demands a little more space for its investigation.

During the late war, reduction in the value of money greatly altered the contract between landlord and tenant, to the advantage of the latter ; and this advantage happened to be progressive : holders of land came to be considered as the most prosperous class in the community, and the natural consequence was a keen competition for land at advanced rents ; it having been found advantageous for a tenant to agree to pay a rent beyond the rate of the time, because the alteration in the value of currency secured him from loss. Thus rents were raised ; until, in 1814, they were calculated to average one pound per acre, on forty millions of acres, in Great Britain : at the same time, these forty millions of rent would command no more of the common commodities of life than twenty millions would have done in 1793, supposing the currency reduced fifty per cent. in value : in this period, therefore, the rise was almost nominal ; and the advance of nominal rent only compensated landlords for a reduction in the value of the currency, and the additional taxes which they had to pay. But, after this period, the tide of value began to turn : the cause of depreciation was removed, and gold began to regain an exchangeable value in this country,

⁸ Subsequently an act passed, limiting the period to April, 1829.

nearer to an equality with that which it had in other European nations; and if rents had fallen in amount as money rose in value, the productive part of the community would have felt no injurious effects from the alterations in rent, since only the same quantities of wealth would have been taken from them. Rents, however, did not fall, but remained at, or nearly at, the same nominal value; while those sums represented much larger quantities of wealth.

A principal cause of this was the tenacity with which tenants adhered to farms, through ignorance of the real nature of their situation. Farming had been so profitable an occupation, that men clung to it, in the natural hope that it would become so again: of the causes which had reduced the value of money, or of those which were then raising it, the farmers, as a body, knew nothing: they kept their ground therefore as well as they could; and by a general concurrence, as it were, rents, once paid in a currency of low value were retained in a higher. The removal of the depreciation took place when the farmers retained much of the large profit made during a previous period; and they were therefore better able to bear that blow: the rise in the value of gold was more gradual, and gave them more time to adjust themselves to their reduced condition; their ability to pay their laborers became of course reduced also; their ingenuity was exercised in paring down wages to the lowest possible rate; and more laborers fell into the ranks of pauperism: thus the farmers, the poor laborers, and the parish officers, struggled on under increasing difficulties; the prices of articles consumed by paupers declined; but the sums necessary to give them relief continued equally large.

The burden of tithes too increased at the same time; for they now became much more than a tenth of the returns for the profit of capital, and the wages of labor employed on the land: they became a tenth of the crop, when that crop was enhanced in value by the high rent; and they commanded in the market a sixth, if not a fifth, of the labor and capital value: from the produce of an acre, which would sell for eighty shillings, twenty shillings would be paid for rent, and eight for tithes; but this eight shillings would be, not one-tenth of the wages and profits, but a sixth and a half part; since eight shillings tithe is the sixth and a half part of fifty-two shillings the sum left for wages and profit after paying the rent and tithe: from this fifty-two shillings, must also be deducted enough to procure seed for the next year,

and to keep up the farming stock, &c.; so that the tithe might be stated at about one-fifth of the wages and profit: hence this burden began to cause more complaint than formerly; for it was more felt: while cultivators suffer under heavy taxes and high rents, the burden of tithe is greatly increased by them; hence the popular discontent at this impost, and the benefit, or rather necessity, of a system of commutation for the sake of the clergy themselves: but the effects did not rest with the agricultural class: neither capital nor labor willingly remain struggling with difficulties if they can escape from them; and while the manufacturing and commercial classes were in a better condition, capital and labor would be, to a greater or less extent, passing from agriculture to manufactures and commerce; and this would continue till competition had reduced all those classes nearly to a level; when this result took place, it was found that, although the price of landed produce was low, compared with what it had been in a currency of lower value; yet it was high, compared with the prices of manufactures: reduction in the quantity, and increase in the value, of money, caused prices generally to fall; but they fell less in landed produce than in manufactures, because it was loaded with heavy taxes, in high rent and tithe; the farmer consequently sold his produce high as compared with manufactures, for the same reason as the maltster sold his malt at a higher price than the barley-grower sold his grain: both parties, having to pay taxes, in addition to the common cost in the profit and wages of the time, as established by competition, were obliged to charge the taxes in the price of their respective articles. The manufacturers complained loudly of this, and demanded a free trade in corn; but the landed proprietors had a predominating influence in the legislature; and the distress which the farmers had really experienced, was made a pretext to compel all classes to purchase produce from the highly rented and tithed lands of Great Britain.

A great stimulus with landholders to retain high rents was the circumstance of their being all burdened with taxes; and a large majority of them under obligation to pay fixed annuities or interest for money on mortgage and other securities borrowed in a currency of low value: men so circumstanced, with large definite sums to pay, must keep up their rentals, or the incumbrances will sweep away their property; a case which at this period frequently occurred: it should also be recollected, that the different parties concerned were not

aware of any alteration having taken place in the value of the money paid and received; for they had their attention fixed merely on the market price of corn. Landlords, as well as tenants, wished only for high prices; and the common language of the latter was,—‘We mind not the amount of rent, let us only have high prices restored:’ to accomplish this point, various expedients were recommended: corn-laws, paper money, and a different system of banking were proposed, and, to a greater or less extent, adopted; but without accomplishing the desired object: it now cost more labor or goods to obtain a given quantity of gold: and therefore more labor or goods would exchange for that quantity of gold: if paper money was forced into circulation to excess, the quantity of currency became more than our command over the gold in the great market of the world would sustain, and gold separated itself from the paper; paper sank in value below gold, and was returned on its issuers; and thus it was again raised to a level with gold: or a part of the gold left the country; the currency remained that quantity which was determined by the reduced command over gold; and a low range of money prices was established accordingly.

From 1821 to 1824 Bank of England notes in circulation were reduced by more than £4,000,000 sterling; but as the bank was known to have issued much more than that sum in coin, no reduction, as far as it was concerned, had been made in the whole quantity of currency: if a part of the coin so issued left the country, this showed that, from some cause or other, our quantity of currency was greater than could be supported by the degree of command we had over the gold market of the world; and therefore the quantity was reduced by gold flowing out.

Peel’s bill, by making the Bank of England liable to pay its notes in gold, obliged it, and consequently all other banks, to keep the amount of their issues within the natural amount of the currency: thus it prevented depreciation, and a rise of prices consequent on that depreciation: this was the extent of its effects as far as respected prices; and any farther alterations in them are attributable to other causes. When the price of wheat this year fell lower than it had been since the commencement of the late war, the causes to which it might be attributed were similar to those that were in operation in 1814 and 1815; namely, the great extent of land cultivated, an abundance of produce, and a withdrawal of the accommodation of country bank notes: it was one of the

oscillations of that state of things which at one time produced cheap gold and a cheaper paper currency; high money prices, with very high farming profits; and, as a consequence, country bank notes in abundance during agricultural prosperity, which fed the farmer when he was in a state of repletion, but withheld supplies from him when in want: this accordingly was a period of severe distress to agriculturists.

The manufacturing classes were, for the time, benefited by the low price of landed produce; for though the wages of inferior workmen decreased, they did not fall in proportion to provisions: but by the year 1824 this advantage was lost, as the wages paid for weaving gave no greater command over food than in 1820. Within this period, the quantity of manufactures was greatly increased;⁹ but such increase was not attended with a corresponding advantage to individuals or to the country, since the foreign consumer obtained the articles at a cheaper rate: an extension of manufactures, in a national and ordinary way, by improvement in the modes of production, and through increased demand, may offer a fair subject of exultation; but if that extension be stimulated, and pushed farther on, by reducing agricultural laborers to a state of wretchedness, and driving them to take refuge in manufacturing districts, there to work at low wages, it may turn out an alarming evil.

The sum expended at this period for the relief of the poor indicated anything but improvement in the condition of the laborers: even if the increase of population be taken into the account, that expended in 1821, when wheat was fifty-four shillings and five pence per quarter, was £6,358,703; while in 1813, when wheat was 120 shillings, it was only £6,294,584; the sum raised in 1821 being equivalent to double the quantity of wheat then, that the sum raised in 1813 was to wheat of that period; and in 1822 the proportion was still greater.

In the mean time, the rate of profit on capital was falling, as it had continued to fall, since the war; which the prices of the public funds plainly indicated: the three per cent. consols, which in 1815 stood at fifty-eight, reached eighty in 1823, and ninety-four in the following year; and this alteration in the rate of interest corresponded with an alteration in the rate of profit, first experienced in the circulating, and finally

⁹ In 1820 above 125,000,000 of pounds of raw cotton were used; in 1822, above 144,000,000; and in 1824, above 174,000,000.

in the whole, capital of the country : under favorable circumstances, this decline in the rate of profit would have been accompanied by a rise of wages ; but under existing circumstances, unfavorable causes counteracted that advantage : yet though it did not cause a positive rise in wages, it kept them higher than they would otherwise have been : if high profit had been added to the other baneful influences which kept down wages, the laboring classes would have been in a dreadful condition : the fall in the rate of profit was a consequence of the over-abundance of capital : when the loan-system, with its unproductive expenditure, ceased, wealth was left in the hands of its accumulators ; to make a profitable use of it, they must either employ it themselves as capital, or place it for that purpose in the hands of others : capital thus became more plentiful in the various departments of production ; and the competition of capitalists lowered the rate of the profit that could be obtained for its use.

Ministers were too prudent to disregard the temper shown by the house in their recent defeats, when the financial arrangements for the year were completed : after having wisely resisted the abolition of the salt tax, they now announced an intention of lowering it from fifteen to two shillings a bushel, although no impost was less severely felt, and no article was more widely diffused throughout the community : two circumstances which ought peculiarly to recommend a tax :¹⁰ beside the annual duty on malt, the additional tax on leather, with that on windows and hearths in Ireland, was also remitted ; and by these means a reduction of taxation was effected to the amount of about £3,500,000.

Among other important proceedings may be noticed the passing of several bills to relax our navigation laws, and promote the system of free trade : the times of monopoly, prohibitions, and the many vexations connected with them, were now rapidly passing by ; and it was seen, that the future greatness of England could not be maintained by worn-out ineffective institutions. The loudest outcry against this relaxation was raised by the ship-owners, who affirmed, that a repeal of the ancient navigation laws would enable other states to outstrip our own, and prepare our ruin ; as if the ship, which is but the means of commerce, was to be regarded as the end : it is however satisfactory to find that

¹⁰ Wherever this article was wanted extensively for the purpose of trade or husbandry, a drawback had been properly allowed.

time has shown the vanity of these predictions; for the relaxation of duties, by which we have been brought nearer to free trade, far from increasing foreign competition, and diminishing British production, has led to results exactly the reverse—the decrease of foreign importation, and the increase of our domestic manufactures, attended by an augmented importation of the raw material.

Lord John Russell did not suffer this session to elapse without calling attention, in a very long and able speech, to the important question of parliamentary reform; the chief feature in his plan being a proposed addition of 100 members to the house of commons, to be returned by the counties and larger towns; a suitable curtailment being effected, by divesting the smaller boroughs of half the privileges which they enjoyed. Such was the scheme, which, if adopted, might have long deferred the more comprehensive plan which finally was carried: but his lordship's moderate proposal was met by strenuous opposition, especially from Mr. Canning, who dwelt at great length on the difference between this and Mr. Pitt's plan; which latter, indeed, as if it had been intended only to delude, avoided all coercion; and treating a sacred trust as private property, proposed the establishment of a large fund to purchase boroughs from their proprietors! The honorable gentleman, having gone through his round of arguments in favor of that system which he found to 'work so well,' urged the house to oppose every introduction of visionary schemes; and asserted, that a search after abstract perfection in government is not an object of reasonable pursuit, because it is not one of possible attainment. 'I conjure the noble lord,' he said, 'to pause before he again presses his plan on the country: if, however, he shall persevere, and if his perseverance shall be successful, and if the results of that success be such as I cannot help apprehending;—his be the triumph, to have precipitated those results; mine be the consolation, that to the utmost, and the latest of my power, I have opposed them.' On a division, ayes were 164, noes 269; and this decreasing majority was received with loud and repeated cheers by the opposition: the proposal of a general resolution by Mr. Brougham, on the influence of the crown, which was introduced with the same ultimate views of reform, and supported by one of the ablest speeches ever delivered in the house, was rejected by a majority of 216 against 101.

During this session, the contest now raging between the Greeks and their inhuman oppressors came under the notice

of parliament. The fierce Mussulmen in their indignation at the revolt and successes of those whom they had been accustomed to regard with ineffable contempt, had committed the most atrocious cruelties: not content with hanging the Greek patriarch and several bishops in their pontifical robes, and ravaging with diabolical fury the beautiful isle of Scio, they had barbarously put to death the hostages placed in their hands by its wretched inhabitants. The sensations of horror produced by this latter event caused Mr. W. Smith to put a question on the subject to lord Londonderry, in the house of commons, regarding connivance, or at least neglect of remonstrance on the part of our diplomatic agents; when the answer of the noble secretary, who made very slight of the proceeding, '*believing* that a *calamity* had occurred, in which ten or twelve hostages had been executed, and which he justified on the plea of barbarities committed by the other party,' produced a severe remonstrance from sir James Mackintosh, who inquired, 'if despatches had been received from our ambassador at the Ottoman Porte, from which it could be ascertained whether any of those persons who had been murdered by the barbarous tyrants of Constantinople had been under the protection of the British minister, lord Strangford; or had surrendered themselves to the Turks, under any pledge, promise, or assurance of safety from that nobleman? He took this opportunity of asking the noble marquiss, whether it was mentioned in any of his recent despatches, that the markets of Smyrna and Constantinople were filled with amiable Greek ladies and children, offered to the caprices of barbarous Mahometan voluptuaries? He also asked, whether ministers could afford the nation any account of the new slave trade, recently established in the East, for amiable and accomplished christian females, by a government which was encouraged and supported by the administration of this free and enlightened country?'

The answer of our secretary to these interrogatories was in the highest degree unsatisfactory: he now '*believed* that *eighty* or *ninety* individuals had recently been executed; but that they could not be considered at all under the protection of the British government, or in such a situation as to require our interference on that ground.' The principles of the holy alliance itself seemed now about to be prostituted in the defence of atrocities, of which the annals of the world scarcely afford a parallel: the spirit of the British people, however, revolted against the mean and dastardly spirit manifested by

their rulers: addresses were circulated by individuals; public meetings were held; and subscriptions raised to support the Greeks in their noble conflict: the flame spread among other European nations; so that reluctant kings and potentates were kept within the line of duty by their subjects, until the great cause of humanity, civilization, and christianity triumphed over oppression, tyranny, and injustice.

Many questions of minor importance were keenly debated in both houses this session, which the limits of this work oblige us to pass over:¹¹ so numerous indeed were the subjects that claimed attention from the legislature, and protracted its discussions, that the prorogation of parliament did not take place till the sixth of August: on the tenth, his majesty embarked at Greenwich, for the purpose of visiting Scotland; and landed on the eighteenth at Leith, where he was welcomed by immense multitudes, who accompanied him to the ancient city of Scottish kings: there was less of wild joy and noisy ebullition in their reception of the monarch than he experienced last year in his Irish expedition; but the principles of veneration and attachment, among a people whose feudal ties had not very long been broken, were not less hearty and sincere: a love of country, self-respect, and religious feelings are generally observable in that submission which the Scotch nation pays to the higher powers. The royal *cortège* was escorted into the magnificent capital of the north by cavalry and infantry, highlanders, and gentlemen archers of the royal guard; and was interesting from the variety of costume adopted on this occasion: the king declared, that the beauty of the scenery, the splendor of the display, and the cordiality of his welcome, affected him more than any thing else in the course of his life: he passed the night at Dalkeith, the seat of the duke of Buccleugh; and the next day held a levée at the palace of Holyrood-house, restored again to its ancient dignity; on which occasion he wore the

¹¹ An important one, however, was the repeal of what was called the retrospective clause in the Marriage Act Amendment Bill; which by setting up a great number of marriages, otherwise invalid, tended to annul certain rights of property, which the invalidity of those marriages had already let in: this repeal was supported by lords Ellenborough and Westmoreland, but opposed vehemently by lord Stowell, and the chancellor; the latter of whom in the warmth of his indignation, exclaimed—‘this repeal is a legal robbery; so help me God!’ The session did not pass without an attack by Mr. M. A. Taylor on the administration of the court of chancery.

highland costume; and at a court held on the twentieth, his majesty received the homage of 3000 loyal subjects. He was entertained at a splendid feast in the parliament-house, given by the lord provost, at which sir Walter Scott officiated as *croupier*: after his majesty's health had been drunk with great enthusiasm, he returned thanks in a dignified manner, and concluded with proposing the health of *sir* William Arbuthnot, *baronet*, and the corporation of Edinburgh. When the king named the lord provost by a title which he thus conferred, the magistrate knelt and kissed the royal hand, held out at the moment; and the incident was loudly applauded by the company: his majesty afterwards gave as a toast—'Health to its chieftains and clans! and God bless the land of cakes!' Few monarchs have been so successful in uniting hilarity and dignity in meetings with their subjects as George IV.; nor are the personal qualifications of a sovereign, in this respect, of small importance to the welfare and happiness of a nation: it was unfortunate, both for himself and his subjects, that the king generally adopted so strict a system of seclusion. On the twenty-ninth, his majesty departed by a different route, and in his way paid a visit to the gallant earl of Hopetoun; at whose house he conferred the honor of knighthood on Raeburn, the celebrated portrait-painter: a fair wind brought the royal squadron to Greenwich on the first of September, where the monarch landed amidst immense crowds of Britons, whose hearts require but little sympathy shown toward their feelings, their wants, and pleasures, to keep them steady in attachment to the throne.

Two days only elapsed after George IV. had embarked on this excursion, when an event took place which caused an important change in the cabinet; leading ultimately to the adoption of a line of policy more generous, more favorable to the cause of general liberty, and therefore more agreeable to the spirit of the British constitution, than that which our government had for some time pursued: this was the death of the marquis of Londonderry, who, in a fit of mental aberration, supposed to have originated from the harassing labors of the late session, as well as from many mortifying reflections cast on his political character, put a period to his existence with his own hand, at North Cray, in Kent: the coroner's jury brought in a verdict of insanity; and his lordship's remains were interred in Westminster Abbey. As a statesman and minister, this country had but little cause to lament his loss, or respect his memory; yet the melancholy end of a nobleman,

whose private character was adorned with many amiable and generous qualities, excited deep commiseration and regret among all whose feelings were not maddened by political exasperation: the shouts of exultation uttered by the populace, while his coffin was removed from the hearse into the sacred edifice, was a sad proof of the prevalence of those principles, which the apostles of infidelity and sedition were at this time busily engaged in propagating; and which demanded all that vigilance of government, all that counteraction from the virtuous and well-instructed portion of society which they soon received. Carlile, the notorious editor of blasphemous publications, had been tried in the court of king's bench, and was suffering the penalty of his offences in Dorchester jail: but in July this year, a woman, named Susannah Wright, was brought before the same tribunal, and found guilty of continuing the publication of this man's blasphemies, composed since his imprisonment: the defendant, who was smartly dressed, and surrounded by four or five more females, read a long address to the jury, in which she proclaimed her utter disbelief in Christianity, or any other religion; professing her readiness to suffer in the cause of Mr. Carlile, whose principles she admired, and of whose doctrines she was a willing propagator. These, and other trials of a similar description about the same period, provoked a considerable discussion respecting the equity and expediency of subjecting such offenders to legal penalties; and the religion so protected by acts and statutes, which make it penal to revile its fundamental doctrines, was termed by its opponents 'the religion of the magistrate.' Much need not be said on this topic: it is the duty of the magistrate to protect the christian religion; because the founders of our constitution, knowing that no political institutions can stand without the basis of religious sanctions, have recognized christianity, as affording the best of all; and by an ecclesiastical establishment, declared it part of the law of the land: with respect to the expediency of punishing those who vilify its doctrines—though religion may have nothing to fear from the infidel and blasphemer, yet it ought to be protected from contumely and insult, even for the sake of the people themselves, who are too prone to despise what they see vilified and degraded by others.

The difficulty of finding a successor to lord Londonderry, especially as leader of the ministerial party in the house of commons, was so great as to subdue at length the resentment of the king toward Mr. Canning, as well as the aversion enter-

tained by the lord chancellor, and his party in the cabinet, for that superiority of talent and liberality of principle, which recommended him to the people at large: moreover, lord Liverpool, who had been connected with him from early life, and knew the value of his extraordinary faculties, was resolute in demanding his re-admission into the cabinet: just therefore as the newly-appointed governor of India was preparing to set sail, he was invited to take the high office of secretary for foreign affairs, where he could, with more satisfaction to himself, maintain the dignity and extend the glory of his country. By the decease of his predecessor, the greatest impediment to liberal principles at home, and to a just as well as generous policy abroad, was removed; and though the change was not immediately perceptible, yet the master spirit was set at work; the power which had been accustomed to paralyse its efforts was no more: and with the accession of Canning to the British cabinet, a new epoch was about to commence in the general system of government.

When this new appointment was made, the duke of Wellington was deputed to take that place which the late lord Londonderry would have occupied at the great congress of Verona. The ostensible object of this assembly was merely to put a period to the Austrian occupation of Naples and Piedmont; but the continental sovereigns had other and more important views, extending to the eastern as well as to the western extremity of Europe; for a considerable period, the Greek population, both of the continent and of the islands, had been in open revolt against their barbarian oppressors; and the contest, marked as it was by dreadful atrocities, continued without any apparent prospect of termination. The majority of the people in all christian states, with a numerous party even among the higher powers, urged by religious and political sympathies, or excited by the illusions of classical enthusiasm, earnestly desired the emancipation of an interesting people, boasting to be descendants of the noblest race of antiquity: among these, Russia, from the identity of her church with that of the Greeks, from the hatred which her people have always borne to the crescent, and from the ambitious views which her sovereigns for the last century have entertained regarding the dismemberment of Turkey, might have been expected to espouse the cause of the insurgents: but it happened at this juncture, that every prepossession inherited or formed by the Russian autocrat was superseded by his fear of revolutionary movements; so that he not only refused to countenance the

Greek cause, but visited its active partisans among his subjects with marks of severe displeasure: not only did he cast aside ancient animosity, and all views of profiting by the various causes of dispute with the Ottoman government, which had been studiously kept open; but himself originated an overture to the principal European states to interpose their mediation: under such circumstances, the representatives of the great powers at Verona, who were all interested in preventing the farther aggrandisement of Russia at the expense of Turkey, found little difficulty in averting the threatened war between those two empires, except what proceeded from the blind obstinacy of the Porte itself: with respect to the Greek insurgents, the congress refused even to admit an envoy from their nation.

The most active measures, however, of this assembly were directed towards Spain: the ultra-royalist faction which had lately obtained a supremacy in French councils, was secretly engaged in plans for the revival of absolute power in that country, which were studiously veiled from Great Britain by the most perfidious denials of any hostile intention. Taking advantage of a pestilent fever which broke out in Catalonia, the French government had drawn a sanatory cordon round the Spanish frontiers; under pretext of which, every possible encouragement was given to the absolute party in Spain, and a furious civil war excited in its northern provinces, where the peasantry were particularly hostile to their new constitution. Toward the close of the present year, the rebel 'army of the faith,' as it was termed, was defeated by the celebrated Mina; when its broken remains, together with the self-constituted regency, found open protection within the French frontiers: the Bourbon government now began to complain of petty infractions of territory, caused by its own acts; and the sanatory cordon, increased by numbers, became gradually converted into an army of observation.

In these circumstances, the cabinet of the Tuilleries directed its representative at Verona to demand categorically of the other powers, whether they would support its armed interposition in the affairs of Spain; when the British government, totally unprepared for such a proposal, instructed their ambassador not only to decline a participation in any measure of that kind, but to renew in the strongest terms their former protestation against the principle of such interference: the proposition however was readily accepted by the despots; and Spain was ordered, by notes from the four powers of Austria, Russia, Prussia, and France, to alter her constitutional system, unless

she chose to abide by the consequences of a refusal: our ministers could only endeavor to avert this aggression by negotiations: while the French government, amusing them until its preparations were complete, finally directed the march of a large army under the hero D'Angoulême, to act in concert with the 'army of the faith,' and restore Ferdinand VII. to the plenitude of arbitrary power.

The report of such an interference, and the insolent language held by the holy alliance, excited much indignation in this country; but no share of it now fell on our ministers; who, far from participating in the despotic league, were generally acknowledged to have used every practicable effort to counteract its designs: numerous reasons existed to check that disposition for war, which sympathy for the Spanish constitutionalists, or abhorrence of the conduct of their enemies, tended to excite; and the nation contentedly relied on the liberal principles which appeared to predominate in the British cabinet.

While the well-known sentiments of Mr. Canning on national law, and his patriotic zeal for the fame of Great Britain, thus inspired his countrymen with confidence in his honorable direction of foreign affairs, it was his aim, at the same time to heal the intestine wounds of this nation: liberating himself from the thralldom of antiquated precedents, and availing himself of advantages from late experience, and the progress of political knowledge, he resolved no longer to stem the tide of public opinion, arrest improvement, and chain down the intellect of the age; which indeed would soon have risen against him like a hundred-handed giant. In the prosecution of his liberal views, he was encouraged and assisted by the official promotion of Mr. Robinson and Mr. Huskisson; the latter of whom was made president of the board of trade, while the former was advanced to the dignity of chancellor of the exchequer; Mr. Nicholas Vausittart taking refuge from the jeers of modern financiers in the house of peers, under the title of lord Bexley. Before we close the annals of this year, it may be remarked, that they were distinguished by the opening, in November, of the Caledonian canal, after a labor of twenty years, and an expenditure of £900,000 on that stupendous work, which opens a communication between the eastern and western seas, and enables vessels to avoid the dangerous navigation of the Pentland-frith, or the channel: a parliamentary grant also was made for the important design of publishing the early histories of Great Britain.

CHAPTER LXII.

GEORGE IV. (CONTINUED.)—1823.

tate of the country at the beginning of 1823—Opening of the session—Debates on Spain and the holy alliance—Affairs of Spain and restoration of Ferdinand VII.—Affairs of Portugal—Agricultural and commercial interests—Free trade—The budget—Affairs in Ireland—Catholic question—Fracas between Mr. Brougham and Mr. Canning—Motions to reform the criminal law—Lord A. Hamilton's motion to reform the state of Scotch representation—Mr. Canning's opinions on the subject of reform, &c.—New London-bridge bill—Mr. Creevey's motion respecting the four and a half per cent. duty on the Leeward Islands—Expenses of the coronation—Other instances of extravagant expenditure exposed by Mr. Hume—The king's donation of the library of George III. to the public—Irish tithe commutation bill—Dissenters' marriage act thrown out—Prorogation of parliament—State of the country—Appointment of consuls to the South American colonies—Sentiments of Mr. Canning on this subject, &c.—Extract from his speech at Plymouth—State of the country at the beginning of 1824—Meeting of parliament—Attack on ministers on account of the occupation of Spain, &c.—Recognition of South American independence—Financial statement—Repeal of taxes, bounties, &c.—Steps towards a more unrestricted system of trade—Debates on the same—Alien bill, &c.—State of Ireland, catholic association, &c.

At the opening of this year, the country presented a more favorable aspect than it had assumed for some time past: commerce and manufactures continued to improve; and the distress of farmers was somewhat mitigated, though landed proprietors were still clamorous for relief. Many petitions on this subject were voted at county meetings; the most remarkable of which was held at Norwich, on the third of January, where a petition in unison with the views of the opposition was proposed and favorably received; but Mr. Cobbett, by way of amendment, presented an address, elaborately, though briefly drawn up; the principal propositions of which were, the reformation of a corrupt parliament; an appropriation of church property to the service of the state; and an equitable adjustment, with regard, not only to the public debt, but to all debts and contracts between man and man: this amendment was carried by acclamation.

The session was opened on the fourth of February by com-

mission, with a speech that elicited general approbation; particularly that part of it which expressed his majesty's determination that he would be no party to those proceedings at Verona which sanctioned the interference of foreigners with the internal affairs of Spain; and that he would use his earnest endeavors and good offices to prevent the calamity of war between that country and France. Mr. Canning, having vacated his seat for Liverpool,¹ had not yet returned to parliament; but an energetic philippic, pronounced by Mr. Brougham against meditated aggressions of the holy alliance, electrified the house: being, however, felt in Spain, it produced an injurious effect on the constitutionalists, by the fatal confidence with which it inspired them. Even in our house of peers a spirit favorable to the liberal cause now manifested itself; and this, added to unanimity of public sentiment, inspired the party in opposition with hopes of a triumph over their opponents: lord Ellenborough, therefore, on the twenty-fourth of April, made a motion for an address to his majesty, expressing, in high terms, a condemnation of the conduct of France and the other allied powers, as well as of the British cabinet, in requiring Spain to alter her constitution at their dictation: after a long debate, however, it appeared, that our ministers had used every practicable effort to prevent an attack on Spain; and had acted the part of sincere friends in advising her to modify a constitution, which, being strongly democratic, was very inimical to the principles of true liberty. The motion was rejected by an immense majority; and a similar one, introduced into the lower house by Mr. Macdonald, was similarly disposed of, after a debate which lasted three nights. Mr. Canning, in a brilliant and argumentative harangue, produced so powerful a conviction that everything had been done which duty and sound policy required in our late transactions with Spain and the allied powers, that Mr. Brougham became anxious to save his party from exposure to defeat by avoiding a division: in this artifice, however, he was foiled by his antagonist, who insisted on the question being put; and as opposition members tried to escape, by quitting the house, their opponents obliged the speaker, according to its rules, to declare the numbers; when the result gave to ministers an overwhelming majority of 372 against 20.

¹ Considering the duties imposed on him by the representation of that important town incompatible with those of his office, he resigned it, and was elected member for Harwich; his friend, Mr. Huskisson, succeeding him for Liverpool.

No regular motion was again made on this subject; and all things in Spain favored the cause of the holy allies. Though public feeling in Great Britain was roused to indignation by the perfidious conduct of the French government, yet it must be said, that public judgment was averse to our entering into a war, for the preservation of a constitution not worth preserving, and unsupported by the great mass of the people. The *hero*, therefore, of the Trocadero, at the head of a large army, supported by the intire resources of an undistracted monarchy, and with the confederated powers of Europe in reserve, found no great difficulty in triumphing over a cause, which was not only opposed by all the bigotry of the Spanish nation, but betrayed by the very troops and leaders who had sworn to uphold it: in a single, and almost bloodless campaign, despotism was restored, together with Ferdinand VII.; who, having been released by the constitutionalists from *surveillance* at Cadiz, exhibited the gratitude of a Bourbon, by innumerable sentences of death, imprisonment, and exile, which followed his restoration. The advance of the French army into Spain was a signal of revolt for the Portuguese royalists, headed by the queen and her second son, Don Miguel: by their intrigues, the inconstant soldiery, ignorant of the object of either party, were excited to destroy that slight frame-work of a constitution which they had raised, and to replace arbitrary power in the hands of the king.

The distress of our landed interests had been discussed in the house of commons early this session; and subsequently on a proposition of Mr. Whitmore for reducing the import price of grain two shillings a year, until it should fall to sixty shillings. The motion was negatived; but a disposition was manifested by government to open the trade in corn: the foreign trade committee was at the same time reappointed, and farther steps were taken to free commerce from restrictions: in prosecuting this more liberal line of policy, ministers acted cautiously and prudently; for they knew that the restrictive system involved so many interests and prejudices, and had taken such deep root in many minds, that it must be gradually relaxed: even where it could be abandoned safely and without delay, it was difficult to persuade men to give it up.

On the twenty-first of February, the new chancellor of the exchequer brought forward his budget; and, discarding the old scheme of financial shifts and mystification, put the house in possession of his views with a candor and simplicity of statement that elicited much applause even from the opponents of

government: the total revenue of the year was estimated at £57,096,988; and the expenditure, including the interest of the debt, at £49,852,786; leaving a clear surplus of above £7,000,000: thence he proposed to relieve the burdens of the country by a repeal of assessed taxes to the amount of £2,000,000, retaining the other £5,000,000 toward the liquidation of the national debt. In this arrangement, rejecting what he considered the delusion of a larger nominal sinking-fund, which in fact had generally been appropriated to different purposes, he swept away the cumbrous machinery which supported it; and, by placing the financial system of the country on a more intelligible foundation, obtained much applause, and carried his estimates for the year with very slight opposition.

No small portion of the session was wasted in discussing the daring insolence exhibited by agents of the ascendant party in Dublin. The government of lord Wellesley was too impartial and enlightened to escape abuse from the Orange faction: he had prohibited them from dressing up the statue of king William in College-green; a ceremony which perpetuated animosity, and frequently led to riot and bloodshed; the Orangemen, however, took fire at this interference with their insulting display of superiority; and when his lordship, on the fourteenth of December, visited the theatre, some wretches threw a bottle at him from the gallery. Three persons were taken into custody; and the attorney-general indicted them for a misdemeanor, instead of a capital offence: bills of indictment were found against two only by the grand jury; and as two persons cannot commit a riot, the finding was nugatory: Mr. Plunkett then filed an *ex officio* information against these persons, whom, on evidence received, he believed guilty; but the petty jury could not agree in their verdict, and the prisoners were discharged: the matter was subjected to much tedious investigation in parliament, which tended at all events to show the daring manner in which juries were packed, and the name of justice was abused in Ireland.

On the seventeenth of April a motion for a committee on the catholic claims was made by Mr. Plunkett, but lost; the question of adjournment being carried by 313 voices against 111. The previous discussion was remarkable for an attack on Canning, fiercer than the susceptible temperament of that gentleman could bear with patience. Mr. Tierney, who had declared that ministers deserted the question of catholic emancipation, was followed in the debate by Mr. Brougham; and he, after praising the single, manly, and upright conduct of

Mr. Peel, who had never swerved from his opinions, and who had not taken office on a secret understanding to abandon the question in substance, while he continued to sustain it in words, contrasted this conduct with the supposed delinquency of Mr. Canning; who, 'when the point was, whether he should submit to a sentence of transportation to India, or be condemned to hard labor at home; when his fate, in fact, depended on lord chancellor Eldon, and his own sentiments on the catholic question, had exhibited such a specimen of monstrous truckling for office as the whole history of political tergiversation could scarcely furnish.' At this moment, Canning, who for some time had labored to control his emotions, and sat with his eye fixed on the member that was speaking, suddenly started up, and interrupted him by exclaiming—'I rise to say, it is false!' A deep silence for a few seconds ensued; after which, the speaker called on the right honorable secretary to retract an expression which any individual of his high rank and office must know to be a complete violation of the rules and orders of the house: Mr. Canning, however, though sorry to have used a word which violated decorum, declared, that he would not for any consideration retract the sentiment; and this he repeated in answer to farther remonstrances from the speaker, who called on the chancellor of the exchequer, and the house generally, to support him in his authority. As Brougham would not explain till Canning had retracted, Mr. Banks moved that both members be taken into custody by the serjeant-at-arms: at last, sir Robert Wilson ingeniously extricated all parties by the suggestion of an hypothetical and mutual explanation; Mr. Banks withdrew his motion; and the right honorable and learned gentlemen declared they would discard the subject from their minds.

On the twenty-first of May, sir James Mackintosh renewed his praiseworthy efforts to reform our criminal code, in a series of resolutions; the first of which went to take away the punishment of death in cases of larceny committed in shops and dwelling-houses, and on navigable rivers. Though these were resisted and negatived by the house, four bills were afterwards brought in by Mr. Peel on the same subject; which fell short indeed of the reforms contemplated by sir James, but still were important steps in a rational reform of our criminal law: by them government was enabled to employ male convicts in hard labor; and judges were relieved from the obligation of passing sentence of death on certain malefactors, except in case of murder. On the twenty-seventh, Mr. Lennard obtained leave

to bring in a bill, abolishing the old and barbarous law, which sentenced the corpse of one guilty of *felo-de-se* to be buried at two cross-roads, with a stake driven through it; leaving the burial to be performed in private, without the ceremonies of our church.

On the second of June, lord Archibald Hamilton brought under consideration the state of representation in Scotch counties; particularly inviting the attention of Mr. Canning to this important question, as one with which he had not yet grappled; and as perfectly different in its nature from that of any question about reform in England, where representation was founded on property and population: neither the one nor the other was necessarily its basis in Scotland; for in the counties it was not founded on property, and in the burghs it was not founded on population. 'In England,' said his lordship, 'the object of all laws on this subject, was to correct abuses which had crept in, and to enforce the rights of electors; but he would show that the defects of the system in Scotland did not rest in the abuses, but in the very nature of the law: for this assertion he had the authority of lord chancellor Thurlow, who declared, that the evil was fundamental, and such as the legislature alone could remedy; for the right of election might rest intirely in the hands of those who had no earthly stake in the country.' After a very able exposition of the case, he proposed five resolutions, the latter of which went to pledge the house to take this subject into its serious consideration during the next session, with a view to effect some extension of the number of votes, and to establish some connexion between the elective franchise and the landed property of the country: the motion was ably seconded by Mr. Maxwell, and supported by sir George Clerk, Mr. Kennedy, sir James Mackintosh, lord Milton, and others; but being opposed by lord Binning and the lord advocate,² was negatived without a division, after the previous question had been carried by 152 against 117 voices.

The noble mover failed in securing the approbation of Mr. Canning; since that gentleman, with all his liberality on other subjects, would never listen to any arguments which might open the door to parliamentary reform: on this question, he always conceded what was undeniable in fact, and clear to

² An officer, who for a great length of time seemed as if he was appointed to be the defender of all abuses, and to take a part exactly opposite to that assigned to the Roman consul; in short, to see—*Ne quid 'commodi' caperet respublica.*

unprejudiced minds ; never, like many of his colleagues, with over-ardent zeal putting falsehood and truth on a level, without conscience or discrimination ; but taking his stand on some specious and tenable objection : thus, instead of asserting that the system was perfect and pure, he granted that many evils complained of actually existed ; yet he asserted, that it worked well, and its evils were far less than those which would result from the application of a remedy. If Great Britain could have been always sure of possessing an enlightened minister at its helm, his reasons would have held good : indeed, this principle might be carried out to much greater extent ; for a despotism would be the best of governments, if it were always possible to secure the best of men for the despot. In the mean time, the great question of parliamentary reform was progressive, and the very obstinacy of Mr. Canning inclined many to favor it ; since no public man ever existed in whose character flaws were more diligently scanned, or exaggerated by political enmity ; and multitudes, blind to his good qualities, were taught to believe that ‘ the system worked well ’ for the gratification of his rapacity and ambition.

On the sixth of June, Mr. Brogden brought up the report of a bill, by which the sum of £150,000 was to be advanced by government, towards the construction of New London-bridge : to Mr. Hume’s objection against this advance in the shape of a gift, it was satisfactorily alleged by alderman Wood, that the work was one of great national utility, and not intended exclusively for the benefit of the city ; that the money was to be paid by instalments, extending over a term of seven years ; and that the corporation was ready to contribute all in their power on this occasion ; to give up nearly £200,000 that was in their hands, and to raise £400,000 more on mortgage : Mr. Ricardo agreed with his friend Mr. Hume ; but the report was received, and the resolution for the proposed advance carried. On the ninth, Mr. Creevey called attention to a very heavy grievance, under which the Leeward Islands labored, by what was called the four and half per cent. duty : having read petitions from five of these islands, appealing to the liberality and justice of parliament, and setting forth their present calamitous circumstances, with their utter inability to bear such a tax, on account of the great depreciation of West India produce, he proposed the abolition of an impost, on which were saddled many pensions granted to our aristocratic families : he thought it hard on these islands, that they should be burdened with the maintenance of so many ladies and gentlemen of condition in England : he was

the last man to urge any interference with private arrangements of the royal family ; but the king had given pensions to two of his sisters at the expense of the unfortunate Leeward Islands : he meant nothing offensive ; but he could not understand on what principle such annuities had been granted ; or why these islands were singled out for the honor of contributing to the subsistence of the duke of Gloucester and the prince of Hesse Homburg : then came five pensions of £500 each to the Misses Fitzclarence from the same source : there were also gentlemen high in office—one whom he saw in his place, and one whom he did not see—who condescendingly allowed the Leeward Islands to make provision for their families ;—an honor, of which they were by no means desirous, and a principle to which he decidedly objected : right honorable gentlemen could not say they were ignorant of the colonies ; for their own acts proved their knowledge of the fact : they could support the colonies, and urge their distress, willingly enough in a particular way : they could tax East India sugar, and the consumer of West India sugar in England ; but it never occurred to them to abate the tax out of which their own pensions were derived. The object of the resolution with which Mr. Creevey concluded, was to obtain a pledge from the house, to remove this grievance from the Leeward Islands, and this scandal from the mother country. He was answered by Mr. Canning, who had been designated in his speech ; and who objected to the motion, as affecting the right of the crown to this particular branch of revenue, and also its right of appropriating the same in any manner deemed suitable by his majesty's government : though he acknowledged the great distress under which the Leeward Islands were then suffering, and wished that the fund could be so modified as to meet the circumstances of that distress ; yet he deprecated every notion of placing it at the arbitrary disposal of parliament, under whose sanction it had so long existed in its present state : indeed, he argued, no vote of that house existed to support the honorable gentleman's argument ; Mr. Burke himself, in his most sanguine efforts to effect a financial reform, had never entertained a doubt respecting the subject of this fund ; but left it, as he found it, at the disposal of the crown. With respect to his own case, alluded to by the mover of this question, he observed ; ' it was true, that many years ago he had held an office ; on retiring from which, by uniform practice sanctioned by law, he became entitled to a pension of £1200 per annum ; but he waived his claim to that annuity ; and it was true, that such right was afterwards commuted for

a pension of half the amount, for a person who had direct claims on him for protection; he remembered also, with satisfaction, that this choice was thought at the time a considerable sacrifice on his part: it was certainly open to parliament to deliberate on particular instances in the disposal of this fund; and he would not complain of the manner in which the honorable gentleman had exerted his right in the present instance; yet he well knew that he (Mr. Canning) could, if he chose, have taunted him with the names of persons in the same situation, and connected with parties whom the honorable gentleman highly respected: that mode however was too invidious to follow: the house had a right to examine into supposed abuses as to the application of this, as well as any other branch of the revenue; but he must say, the honorable gentleman did not seem to have made out any case which called for censure.' The house agreed with Mr. Canning: and, rejecting Mr. Creevey's resolutions by a majority of 103 to 57 voices, gave an accelerated velocity to the cause of *parliamentary reform*.

Nor did this increased velocity seem likely to be retarded when the expenses of the late coronation came before the commons; and called forth many severe animadversions from Mr. Hume, not only on the length of time which had elapsed before they were laid on the table, but on the enormous extent to which they ran. The chancellor of the exchequer had promised that they should not exceed £100,000; but they now turned out to be £238,000; the surplus having been taken from the French indemnities! Estimates so totally at variance with the expenses could only be characterised as a folly and a farce: some of the items of this sum were especially noticed; for instance, the sum of £111,000 to decorate Westminster-abbey and hall; £27,700 paid to the master of his majesty's robes, on account of those habiliments; and £3000 granted to sir George Naylor towards the expenses of publishing an account of the ceremony. Of what service, said Mr. Hume, was it to attempt the relief of public burdens, by cutting down inferior clerks, and inflicting distress on other individuals, when such sums as these were expended for such purposes? He also reproached the ministry with bad faith, who had called for so small a sum as had been originally mentioned, and afterwards proposed a vote to the amount of £238,000: well knowing, that if the latter sum had been originally asked for, it would not have been granted: he also accused the chancellor of the exchequer and his colleagues of violating public faith, by taking money to which they had no right; subtracting £138,000

from the sum paid by France for indemnities to this country, and which ought to have been appropriated to the ways and means: the honorable gentleman thought the house would fail in its duty to the public, if it did not instantly call for an examination into the profligate extravagance of this job; and he concluded with proposing a committee for such purpose; but more especially to inquire, by what authority the sum of £138,000, had been applied to the coronation expenses without previous sanction from the house.

On Mr. Hume's amendment being put, the chancellor of the exchequer rose; and, under pretence of being taken by surprise, made a miserable reply: however, it satisfied his audience, and the amendment was negatived by a majority of 110 to 65. The house next went into committee; and the sum of £160,000 was proposed towards defraying the civil contingencies of 1823: this gave Mr. Hume an opportunity of bringing forward many other items in the extravagant system of expenditure now pursued; particularly, the sum of £5327 for furniture in the royal yacht, £504 for plate in the Rolls-chapel, and £1329 for the standards of the three regiments of foot guards: he also drew attention to charges made on account of foreign ambassadors; though, in a diplomatic point of view, this country was worse served than any other in Europe; everything being done at the head-quarters of our allies; while our government was kept in such ignorance, that its envoys might be as well retained at home. The honorable member, in the absence of returns, which the secretary for foreign affairs refused to produce, referred to the comparative statement of expenses for the diplomatic services of 1792 and 1820:—

Total amount of salaries and annual allowances	1792. £83,463	1820. £149,778
Outfit and equipage	8,000	13,191
Extraordinary and incidental expenses, charges, &c.	5,985	35,092
Pensions to retired ministers	11,486	54,204
	<hr/> £101,734	<hr/> 252,265
		<hr/> 101,734
		<hr/> £150,531

‘And this difference,’ said Mr. Hume, ‘exists, although Poland and Brussels, the Hans Towns, Genoa, Cologne, Hesse Cassel, and Venice form each an item in the account of 1792, and not in that of 1820; as they have been expunged from the list of independent states; while the only additional countries included in that of 1820 are Wurtemberg and Brazil, with £2000 for

Persia. After commenting on the distinction between that part of the civil list appropriated to special purposes of government, and the other part applicable to the expenses of the king's household; and contending, on the authority of Mr. Fox and sir Fletcher Norton, that the former was under the control of parliament,—the honorable gentleman concluded by moving for a reduction of £52,799 from the present vote of £160,090: Mr. Canning, however, was ready to defend this expenditure; the house was satisfied; and Mr. Hume's amendment was rejected by seventy votes against sixteen.

As our attention has been called to so many cases of ministerial profusion, several of which arose from a desire to indulge his majesty's love of splendor, justice requires that we should notice a noble instance of royal munificence, calculated not only to benefit the present age, but to extend its advantages to remote generations. By a letter addressed to lord Liverpool, in January, the king signified his intention of presenting to the British nation that valuable library which had been collected by his father, for the purpose (according to his own expressions) of 'advancing the literature of his country, while he paid a just tribute to the memory of a parent, whose life was adorned with every public and private virtue.' This letter, together with certain resolutions of the trustees of the British Museum on the subject, having been laid before the commons, was referred to a select committee; which, on the sixteenth of April, made its report. After noticing the great value and extent of the library, consisting of more than 65,000 volumes, besides a numerous collection of geographical and topographical works; the committee expressed an opinion, that the greatest benefit would accrue to the public, if his majesty's magnificent donation were placed under care of the trustees of the British Museum; and if a building were raised for its reception, forming part of a general design for an edifice calculated to contain the several collections of that institution: the committee, in conclusion, recommended that successive grants should be made to effect the purposes above specified; in consequence of which the house voted a sum of £40,000 to commence the work; and the foundation of the new structure, on a plan prepared by Mr. Smirke, and approved by the lords of the treasury, was laid this year. The noble room intended for the royal library was completed in 1827, and in the following summer received this valuable collection; a splendid monument of the good taste and patriotic spirit of George IV.

During the present session, a very beneficial act was passed

for the commutation of tithes in Ireland; also one to remedy the imperfection of an act passed in 1800, for enabling the king and his successors to dispose of private property, but which had been so worded as to leave them without the power to dispose of lands belonging to them before their accession. In the house of commons, Mr. John Williams brought forward the first of those motions respecting the court of chancery, directly inculcating the conduct of its head officer: it was keenly debated for two nights, and then negatived by 174 votes against 89. A motion, made by lord Lansdowne, for the second reading of the dissenters' marriage bill, which might enable them to have the marriage ceremony performed in their own chapels, was warmly supported by lords Ellenborough, Calthorpe, and Liverpool; but though the principle of the bill was supported by the archbishop of Canterbury, it was vehemently opposed by the lord chancellor, as containing principles inconsistent with the predominancy of the established church, and was thrown out by a majority of twenty-seven against twenty-one: subsequent proceedings in parliament were not marked by any character of peculiar importance; except the appointment of a deputy speaker in the house of lords, for the purpose of enabling their lordships to dispatch more business in the matter of appeals: lord Gifford obtained this high and responsible office, in which he gave much satisfaction, and enabled the lord chancellor to devote a greater portion of his time to the duties of his own court. It may also be observed that an act was passed, though with a strong protest from the duke of Newcastle and lord Abingdon, enabling the duke of Norfolk, though a Romanist, to execute his high office of earl marshal, on taking the oath of allegiance, without that of supremacy, or the declaration against transubstantiation; and the session, which was on the whole very laborious, but more harmonious than any other since the peace, was closed by commission on the nineteenth of July.

Throughout the remainder of the year, our internal prosperity appeared to advance, and public confidence in government increased: this feeling was mainly attributable to an altered tone in the administration, which was ascribed to the ascendancy of Mr. Canning over the cabinet; while the general popularity of that minister was increased by the whole tenor of his measures. One of the most decided of these, and most advantageous to Great Britain, was the appointment of British consuls to the chief commercial places in the revolted colonies of Spain, as soon as the mother country fell again under the

despotism of its tyrannical monarch ; and this virtual recognition of South American independence was accompanied by a spirited declaration to the perfidious cabinet of M. Villele ; which was plainly told, that although Great Britain, faithful to her principles of neutrality, would not oppose the attempts of Spain to recover her colonies, the interference of any third power would be met by force. Though British feelings, irritated as they were by the treachery of France and the arrogance of its holy allies, had been suppressed by the consideration that war would grievously interrupt public industry and improvement, yet our minister was anxious to make it known, that there was a limit to forbearance ; and though the ultimate object of this country was the peace of Europe, yet it was not to be supposed that she either feared or was unprepared for war : these sentiments he expressed in one of his happiest effusions, when returning thanks for the freedom of the borough of Plymouth, conferred on him during a visit to that grand receptacle of the British navy which afforded him so beautiful and appropriate an illustration of his subject. ‘ Our present repose,’ he observed, ‘ is no more a proof of our inability to act, than the state of inertness and inactivity, in which I have seen those mighty masses that float in the waters above your town, is a proof that they are devoid of strength, and incapable of being fitted for action : you well know, gentlemen, how soon one of those stupendous masses, now reposing on their shadows in perfect stillness, how soon on any call of patriotism or necessity, it would assume the likeness of an animated thing, instinct with life and motion ; how soon it would ruffle, as it were, its swelling plumage ; how quickly it would put forth all its beauty and bravery, collect its scattered elements of strength, and awake its dormant thunder. As is one of these magnificent machines, when springing from inaction into a display of its might, such is England herself, while apparently passive and motionless, she silently concentrates the power to be put forth on an adequate occasion : but God forbid that that occasion should arise ! After a war sustained for nearly a quarter of a century, sometimes single-handed, and with all Europe arrayed at times against her, or at her side, England needs a period of tranquillity, and may enjoy it without fear of misconstruction : long may we be enabled, gentlemen, to improve the blessings of our present situation ; to cultivate the arts of peace ; to give to commerce, now reviving, greater extension, with new spheres of employment ; and to confirm the prosperity now generally diffused throughout this island.’

The year 1824 shone still more auspiciously than its predecessor on our commerce and manufactures; which appeared to receive a new impulse from the more enlarged and secure opening of the South American market: even agriculture felt the influence of this amelioration; and in all other branches of industry prices began to rise; the complaints of landowners were faint or unheard; and the produce of our revenue exceeded the most sanguine expectations. This revival of prosperity, with an abundance of capital accumulated in the late war, but shut up during a long stagnancy of the markets, gave a dangerous activity to enterprise, and generated that spirit of hasty speculation, which appeared in the memorable era of joint-stock schemes: enormous sums of money were now expended in digging for gold in South America; and such was the rage for speculation, that shares even of unexplored mines rose twelve hundred per cent.; soon alas! to fall below their original cost: the disastrous consequences, however, of this extraordinary mania were as yet neither felt nor foreseen; and when parliament met on the third of February, congratulations expressed by the commissioners, in the name of his majesty, on the prosperous state of the country, were echoed back in the addresses of both houses. So generally popular and unexceptionable had been the measures of government, that opposition found little to attack in our internal policy; the continued occupation of Spain therefore by French troops, and the expediency of completely recognising her revolted colonies, formed for a time, the chief objects of discussion. Lord Lansdowne, deploring the fate of the peninsula, regretted that ministers had not remonstrated with more energy; and thought that a greater advance should have been made toward our complete recognition of South American independence. Mr. Brougham, in the lower house, attacked the general tyranny and particular cruelties of the Austrians in one peninsula, and of Ferdinand in the other, with a strong battery of invective; and, in allusion to the impotent efforts made by this country to ward off the blow from the constitutionalists, observed, 'that England was bound over in recognisances of £800,000,000 to keep the peace.' Our foreign policy regarding Spain was subsequently discussed on motions made by lord John Russell and lord Nugent; but it was vindicated by Mr. Canning, who showed that the conduct of Great Britain had been regulated by a due regard for her own interests and dignity, as well as by an honorable attention to the just principles of international law; and that while we preserved peace, so necessary under

present circumstances, we had, by bold and open remonstrances, paralysed schemes which the holy allies had formed, for extending their system of interference from the home government of Spain to the internal condition of her colonies. These explanations were so generally satisfactory, that, except in the case of lord Lansdowne's motion, the question was not pressed to a division: the propriety of admitting the South American colonies into the rank of independent powers, was, in fact, only a consideration of time; and before the middle of this year, our cabinet determined on the recognition of Mexico, Columbia, and Buenos Ayres; with which states treaties of amity and commerce were concluded.

Thus, the power so long exercised with injustice and partiality by Spain over her colonies vanished for ever; whatever forms the political relations of these states with the mother country may assume their independence became, at all events, established. 'But,' as professor Heeren rightly observes, 'they have their most dangerous enemy in themselves. Who, indeed, would ensure to them solidity and permanence? for, though we see republican institutions springing up almost everywhere in this continent, how can such subsist, even in the most favorable event, among nations where color determines caste, and military commanders prescribe laws? and how can the universally-proclaimed freedom of the press be compatible with their hierarchy?'³ The learned writer might have gone a step farther, and asked, how any political liberty can subsist with that ambitious hierarchy, alienated as it is from national and domestic ties, or with that exclusive and intolerant support of the Roman church, which these states have interwoven in the very frame-work of their constitutions? What party, when freedom was introduced into Spain and Italy, was so much on the alert to oppose it, as the popish clergy? They exerted every nerve to prevail on Austria and France to attack the new institutions: in both countries, the common soldiers and the people, under the dominion of the priests, refused to fight; and the invaders overran them in a single campaign, almost without the necessity of striking a blow.

From the statement of the chancellor of the exchequer, it appeared that the public revenue continued to improve: notwithstanding the remission of taxes, it had last year produced £57,672,999; leaving a clear balance of £1,710,985 over the expenditure, beside the established sinking fund of five millions. A part of this surplus he proposed to employ in

³ Vol. ii. p. 381.

granting half a million for the erection of new churches; of £300,000 for the gradual renovation and improvement of Windsor-castle, that majestic seat of British monarchs; also of £60,000 for the purchase of the Angerstein pictures, in furtherance of a laudable design to establish a national gallery for the fine arts. These acts of liberality were rendered more easy by the unexpected repayment of £2,500,000 by Austria, for loans advanced by our government during the late war: it was, in fact, a small dividend on the debt due to this country; but, though it did not satisfy the expectations of some gentlemen in the house, it was rightly characterised by Mr. Canning as 'a god-send,' and was dispersed accordingly.

In his financial calculations for the present year, Mr. Robinson anticipated a continued surplus; on the strength of which, he proposed a farther repeal of taxes to the amount of more than a million; and as an auxiliary measure, he suggested the discontinuance of certain bounties on fisheries and manufactures, which were no longer necessary: an extension also of the scheme for reducing the interest on our national debt was a prominent feature in his arrangement: thus, he proposed to convert the old four per cent. stock, amounting to £75,000,000, into a new fund, bearing interest at three and a half per cent.; giving the holders of course the option of being paid off at par, or of acceding to the new plan; which was more profitable to the country than that of last year, since no bonus was given or required; and therefore the nominal amount of the debt was not increased. This arrangement, by which an annual saving of £875,000 was effected, met with the approbation of parliament, and was carried into execution with great facility.

Steps were taken this session toward a more unrestricted system of trade: one important measure consisted in a repeal of what were still left of protecting duties between Ireland and Great Britain; and this at the demand of the Irish themselves, taught by experience how unavailing those fiscal barriers had been to improve their trade. Enactments also were passed, tending to withdraw British manufacturers from the protection of laws which prohibited the importation of foreign silks into this realm: the plan adopted was, to lower the import duties on raw and thrown silk, to repeal bounties on the exportation of this manufacture, and to substitute a duty of thirty per cent. on foreign silks, instead of prohibiting their importation. The first part of this plan was generally

approved ; the second was received with indifference ; but the third met with great opposition from the trade ; and counsel were heard against it at the bar of the house. The principles on which ministers proceeded were ably expounded by Mr. Huskisson, who illustrated the importance of liberating commerce from all unnecessary restrictions, by tracing the progress of the cotton trade : he asked whether, if restrictions had not been removed from that manufacture, Great Britain could ever have made the gigantic exertions which distinguished her in the last war ? ‘ Does not,’ he said, ‘ the number of persons employed in it, to the amount of 1,200,000, whose wants are supplied in return for their labor, afford more real encouragement to agriculture, than any regulations made to force up artificial prices ? It is to the growth of wealth, and the progress of industry that this country must look, both for relief from present burdens, and for the means of making fresh exertions whenever they may be demanded : but it is not in the power of any artificial measures to give that real relief to agriculture, or to any other kind of occupation, which can only flow from increasing activity, and constant industry among the people : the most remarkable feature in the history of the cotton manufacture is the impetus which it has given to invention and discovery, and the ingenuity which it has called into action : the effect of this has been to produce the article at the lowest possible rate ; and we find that a greater number of persons have been employed to direct the machinery, in proportion as the manufacturer has had the prospect of fresh resources. But what is the situation of the silk-trade under the prohibitory system, which some consider its greatest advantage ? Why, the monopoly has produced, what it is always sure to produce, a total indifference to improvement : that useful zeal, which gives life to industry, which fosters ingenuity, and which in manufacturing concerns promotes a desire to produce the article in its most economical form, has been completely extinguished ; and in this branch we are left far behind our neighbors : if the same system had been continued with respect to the cotton manufacture, it would have been at this moment as subordinate in extent to the woollen, as it is junior to it in its introduction into this country.’

Mr. Huskisson proceeded to notice the unpleasant effects of prohibitory duties, in the power they give to the commonest ruffian in the street of snatching from a person of any rank an article suspected to be of foreign manufacture : he pointed out

their injurious effects in the promotion of smuggling, and in the breaches of the law to which they led so many persons : he also showed, from the confession of those who petitioned against the proposed regulations, that a duty of thirty per cent. would be quite sufficient to protect our own manufactures : indeed, a deputation from Manchester had declared, that, under such a duty, they could meet the French in any country of the world. 'I am perfectly aware,' he observed, 'that the proposed alteration must affect particular interests ; but in every change there will be partial interests that must suffer for a time ; and all that parliament can do, all indeed that is its duty to do, is to deal with them as tenderly as possible : there are also persons not remiss in opposing this measure, who have created a strong feeling out of doors against it ; I mean all those who, under the prohibitory system, have benefited by smuggling : they are naturally afraid that their trade will suffer ; and that if there be no prohibition, no lady will fancy a French article when she can get an English one.'

Mr. Baring, one of the enlightened advocates of free trade, being probably influenced by the prejudices of his constituents at Taunton, resisted this measure as a hazardous experiment : the French, he urged, had an advantage over us in silk, in machinery, and in cheapness of labor ; yet the mode taken by the chancellor of the exchequer to oppose such advantages, was to open the English market to French silks. After dilating on these topics, he was answered by Mr. Wallace, who contended, that a high duty on the raw material was the principal reason why we had been inferior to others in this manufacture : but we now possessed great advantages in our Indian silk ; and if the trade were thrown open, we might even supply French markets with that article : the silk of India was cheaper than that of Italy ; and if there were no duty on it, and no prohibition, England would be the mart for the raw material, as well as for the manufacture : if it were true that we had reared a considerable trade under a large duty, why should we despair of extending it when that duty was abolished ? Notwithstanding the opposition of partial interests, this ministerial scheme met with general support from both sides of the house, and was carried without difficulty. After various fluctuations, occasioned chiefly by the peculiar nature of the times ; and after innumerable petitions, signed by multitudes in the various districts of the silk manufacture, predicting utter extirpation to the trade, and ruin to all engaged in it, we have the satisfaction of seeing the admirable effects

resulting from a firm resistance made against ignorant and senseless clamor: the British silk trade is increased tenfold since those predictions were uttered; and the articles manufactured, though lower in price, are equal in beauty to the once coveted productions of the French or Indian loom. Among other important measures of relaxation carried by ministers, was the immediate removal of all unequal restrictions in the import and export trade of wool, with a gradual approach to the same system in linen manufactures.

The renewal of the alien bill was resisted with unusual energy, especially by Mr. Hobhouse and sir James Mackintosh: the act indeed was carried; but the mildness with which it was put into operation, doubtless proceeded in a great degree, from the rigid scrutiny to which it was subjected by these and other spirited individuals: the abuses of the church in Ireland, and of the court of chancery in England; ⁴ led to vehement discussions, but to no legislative enactment.

Much attention was given to the state of the sister island in both houses; each of which appointed a committee of inquiry into its general condition. The close of this year, however, saw the establishment of a political engine of extraordinary power, in the Catholic Association; the energies of which were subsequently wielded with so much effect by Mr. O'Connell, a barrister of eminence, who soon became the acknowledged leader of the disaffected party, and encouraged them to effect by union and agitation what had been denied to remonstrances and entreaties: probably, at first, neither the government nor the association itself was aware of the extent to which its formidable powers could be carried: but it soon extended its correspondence, and appointed regular agents for every Roman Catholic parish in the kingdom; when, having ascertained the influence which it possessed over a great majority of the Irish people, it proceeded to levy a large revenue under the denomination of a catholic rent, and to usurp the functions both of legislative and executive authority. During the year now described three men, celebrated in the annals of their country, departed this life; lord Keith, the earl St. Vincent, and lord Erskine: the latter of whom, it is grievous to say, sullied the brightness of his high reputation by the eccentricities of his latter days.

⁴ 'Mr. Williams,' says lord Eldon, 'made his attack last night, as savage as the Dey of Algiers, with whom we are gone to war.'--*Life*, vol. ii. p. 488.

CHAPTER LXIII.

GEORGE IV. (CONTINUED.)—1824.

Parliamentary discussions—State of the colonies—Affairs of Spain and Portugal—Death of Louis XVIII.—East Indian affairs under lord Amherst's presidency—Case of Mr. Buckingham—Burmese war—Peace concluded on terms favorable to the British government—Commercial treaty with the court of Ava—The rajah of Bhurtpoor reinstated by lord Combermere—Arrival of lord William Bentinck as governor-general.

AN instance of apparent severity and injustice was brought before the commons by Mr. Brougham, and occasioned much discussion both within and without the house. During the preceding session, the agitation of measures in behalf of our negro population in the colonies was followed by some lamentable consequences, which seemed to result from the rash enthusiasm of the advocates for an immediate abolition of slavery: not aware of the difficulties with which the British government had to contend, and not content to await the influence of time and instruction in preparing the slave population to profit by an improved condition, these well-meaning, but inconsiderate persons, had pressed on parliament the consideration of a subject which could scarcely be discussed without danger; and Mr. Buxton, on the fifteenth of May, 1823, after a speech very inflammatory in its tendency, moved, that a state of slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British constitution as well as the christian religion, and ought to be gradually abolished throughout the British colonies. Mr. Canning, in deprecating the agitation of this question, explained the measures in progress for bettering the condition of slaves, and obtained, for a time, the acquiescence of the house in the prudence of government: but the dreaded mischief had been done; the ignorant negroes had been led to believe that their freedom, granted by parliament, was withheld by the colonial assemblies; which delusion caused not only an insurrection in Demerara, but irritation, violence, and disorder throughout all the other colonies. The assemblies, it is true, rejected every recom-

mendation for improving the condition of slaves, and were at open war, especially in the chief island, Jamaica, with the local government; but it must at the same time be confessed, that a party of ignorant and fanatical missionaries excited the negro population so as to alarm the fears and inflame the passions of the colonists. In this state of general feeling, a missionary, named Smith, was tried by martial law on a charge of stimulating the negroes to revolt in Demerara; being guilty, at least, of concealing a knowledge of their intended rising from the colonial authorities: this man was condemned to death; but, his case being sent to England for the consideration of the privy council, he died in prison before a pardon, which was extended to him, could arrive. While the colonists, however, were indignant at this remission of the sentence, and at the little anxiety shown, as they thought, by government for their lives and property, the abolition party, joined by the regular opposition in parliament, loudly denounced the court-martial held on Smith as illegal, and his sentence as unjust: Mr. Brougham's motion to this effect was supported by 146 votes; and it was with great difficulty that ministers, assisted by Mr. Canning's eloquent sophistry, could procure a small majority to acquit his judges: the plans of government, however, for ameliorating the condition of the slaves, which generally combined benevolence with caution, strongly recommended themselves to all rational advocates of freedom: these, as stated by lord Bathurst and Mr. Canning, consisted chiefly in abolishing the habitual use of the lash, and its application to females; in regulating the punishment of refractory slaves; in preventing the separate sale of husband, wife, and children; in protecting the property of slaves, admitting their evidence, and facilitating their manumission; also in providing for them religious instruction, and a regular ecclesiastical establishment, with two bishops at its head, one presiding over Jamaica, and the other over the Leeward Islands.

While our settlements at the Cape of Good Hope were extending themselves toward the interior of the country, and increasing in commercial prosperity, the quiet of the colony was disturbed by the unpopularity of its governor, lord Charles Somerset. Though the vexations complained of were exaggerated, and the complaints sometimes unreasonable, yet enough remained to show that his lordship was deficient in that candor and liberality of spirit which will prevent a public officer from carrying feelings of resentment and partiality into the affairs of administration: his high birth and connexions,

however, secured him from animadversions in the proper quarter. Among all the constituents of good government no one is more admirable than an aristocracy founded upon birth : most unwisely therefore does a ministry act, which, by screening the faults of any member in this body, contributes to bring odium upon the whole. Another part of the great African continent was at this time a scene of more tragical events ; for the administrators of the small British settlements on the Gold Coast, having imprudently taken part in the quarrels of the natives, and violated the terms of a treaty concluded some years before with the powerful king of the Ashantees, were attacked by a large army of warlike and well-appointed troops under the command of that monarch. Sir Charles Macarthy, governor of Sierra Leone, having advanced against them with a few Europeans, aided by some thousands of barbarian allies, much inferior both in courage and means to his antagonists, was defeated with a dreadful carnage, especially of his British followers, and the loss of his own life : this lamentable catastrophe excited alarm for the safety of our principal settlements at Cape Coast Castle ; but the *Thetis* frigate having opportunely arrived with a few troops, and the garrison being strengthened by a small body of auxiliaries from Acra, the enemy were repulsed, and compelled to raise the siege which they had laid to the fort : colonel Sutherland afterwards overthrew them in several other engagements ; and these defeats, together with famine and disease, put an end to their desultory hostilities.

Our North American colonies were now in the enjoyment of great commercial and agricultural prosperity ; which, however, in the case of Lower Canada, began to be interrupted by dissensions not unlikely to produce important consequences. On the fourth of March, the house of assembly voted an address to the king, in which they represented very strongly, that as the members of the church of England constituted only a minority of the population, the clergy of the church of Scotland, as well as the ministers of dissenters, had an equitable claim to participate in the revenues set apart for religious instruction. Serious disputes also had arisen between the house of assembly on the one hand, and the legislative council, with the governor at its head, on the other : part of the revenue of this province was raised under the authority of the British parliament, and appropriated to the civil expenses ; while another portion of it had been appropriated by acts of the provincial parliament : the house of assembly persevered

in claiming an unlimited right to dispose of the whole; in which pretension it was resisted by the governor and legislative council: the consequence was, that the supplies were refused, and the different branches of legislature separated in very bad humor with each other. Amid the many schemes of speculation by joint-stock companies, which the apparent prosperity of the nation, and the abundance of unemployed capital, brought out this year, was one called the Canada company, which had the approbation of our colonial department, and the sanction of a royal charter: lands were to be granted by the crown, at a fixed price, to this association, which was to employ its funds in establishing and assisting settlers: whether the scheme might answer to the speculators or not, there seemed no reason to doubt but that the colony would benefit by the diffusion of a large capital among its inhabitants, as well as by the employment of skilful and experienced men.

From the continent of Australia the most pleasing prospects continued to be unfolded: the British settlements in New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land prospered, because the number of free laborers increased, and the stream of emigration began to set toward that quarter: within a few years, the population had more than doubled itself; and important returning cargoes, especially of wool, began to remunerate the mother country for its expenditure; while a brisk trade was thence carried on with India and the remotest regions of the world: the chain of mountains also in the rear had been surmounted, and roads over them constructed; spacious and fertile plains, intersected with rivers, invited agriculturists; and the town of Bathurst had been made a starting point for explorers of the interior. On the Society Islands christianity was victorious; the Sandwich Isles, so shamefully treated afterwards by French aggression, under Louis Philippe, and Guizot,¹ resembled a British colony; and the New Zealanders, carrying on an increasing traffic with New South Wales, began to eat potatoes instead of human flesh. 'All these things,' says Heeren, 'are elements of a new order of things; elements of one grand, universal, political system, growing out of the narrow colonial system of Europe.'²

While the energies of Spain were chained down by absolute

¹ When such men sacrifice the principles of honor, justice, and humanity, to curry favor with the basest portion of the people, and the vilest part of the press, it is enough to make us doubt the very existence of public virtue.

² Vol. ii. p. 399.

power, events of an extraordinary nature occurred in Portugal : the constitutional government in that country had scarcely been established, before it was overturned by the troops under Don Miguel ; but now that worthy scion of a degenerate stock made an attempt to dethrone his own parent. In May this year, the king's palace at Lisbon was surrounded by the troops in garrison ; his majesty's servants were denied access to his person ; and his ministers were even thrown into prison : the diplomatic body, including the pope's nuncio, then interfered, and procured some degree of liberty to the king ; but this was thought so imperfect and insecure, that, following the advice of the French ambassador, his majesty took refuge on board a British ship of war in the Tagus ; and was thus enabled to assert his dignity, and re-establish his authority. With respect to the author of these outrages on regal and parental authority, his confiding father considered him as having been misled by evil counsellors, and generously carried his youthful indiscretions to the account of involuntary faults : he was, however, recommended to visit foreign courts, in order to gain some experience of the world ; and when the course of his peregrinations brought this accomplished traveller to that of Great Britain, he was loaded with honors and caresses ; being received by the dominant political party in this country as a mirror for princes, the very representative of all *preux chevaliers* : after such a reception, he was dismissed to improve the Braganza breed by marrying his own niece,³ with the hearty benedictions of British courtiers.

On the sixteenth of August, died Louis XVIII., after a long and painful illness borne with much patience and christian resignation ; for this monarch was firm in his religious principles, though by no means a bigot ; as a proof of which it is asserted that no ecclesiastic attended the procession at his funeral : his departure was evidently calculated to renew in France scenes similar to those which occurred in England after the decease of Charles II. ; for the brother of Louis was as great a bigot in religion as the brother of Charles ; and the bigotry of both impelled them to acts of the most tyrannical complexion : the chief obstacle, during the late reign, to the completion of the French constitution, lay in what was termed the occult government, organised and directed by the presumptive heir to the throne, and his partisans ; promoted by priests and

³ Donna Maria da Gloria, however, escaped this distinguished honor of marrying her uncle ; and, like our own lamented princess Charlotte, showed a will of her own in these matters.

jesuits, grasping at wealth and spiritual domination, perverting every stream of public justice, disturbing the harmonies of family connexions, and thus poisoning the fount of social happiness: there was scarcely a town or village in France, to which ramifications of this diabolical confederacy did not extend, or where it had not its secret committee; from among the members of which it forced government to choose the agents of authority: all men of good sentiments, as they were termed, that is, all who were slavish in politics and superstitious in religion, belonged to this class; of which, while many were sincere, more were hypocrites, who assumed a mask, in order to gratify their ambition and cupidity: the existence of such a faction, and the protection it enjoyed, exposed the good faith of the late king to suspicion, whilst it terrified the friends of the charter, and exasperated the fierce democratical party, which fortunately was not extinguished in France: they soon drove his successor from the thorne.

The serious war which broke out this year in the east, between our company and the Burmese sovereign, naturally recalls us to a consideration of Indian affairs since the retirement of the marquis of Hastings. The governor appointed to succeed that wise and patriotic statesman was lord Amherst; who, being chiefly known as an unsuccessful ambassador to the court of Peking, had to encounter all the evils of invidious and disadvantageous comparison. At the period of lord Hastings's departure in the beginning of 1823, our Indian territories were in a state of profound peace; and until his successor should arrive, Mr. Adam, senior member of the council, assumed the reins of government: during the short period of this gentleman's administration, the case of Mr. Buckingham occurred, which has so often brought the question of a free press in India before the British public. That gentleman had been established some years at Calcutta, where he set up a newspaper, which obtained very extensive circulation; but this was expressly contrary to regulations of the British government in India: during the administration of lord Cornwallis, a Mr. Hickey had attempted to publish unrestrained opinions on matters of administration; and his journal had been suppressed by the noble marquis: he complained bitterly of what he considered a wanton act of tyranny: and was advised by the governor, if he thought himself aggrieved, to seek his remedy in a court of law; but as he could prove no malice or illegal exercise of authority, he well knew that he would obtain no redress, and therefore

abstained from the attempt. After that period, articles were occasionally published, more perhaps from inadvertency than design, which called for censure; and some cases of this nature led to an order of lord Wellesley, that the proof sheets of newspapers should be inspected by the secretary of government; a measure which had the decided approbation of that eminent statesman, sir John Malcolm: in allusion to it, he observed,—‘that so far as European society alone was concerned, he could not say that the existence of a free press would immediately endanger our Indian empire: he was satisfied, however, that it would excite dissensions, cherish insubordination, and produce evils a hundred times greater than any good it could effect; but its operation on the European part of the community was a very small part of this question:’⁴ accordingly, he proceeded to point out its injurious effects among a rapidly increasing portion of the population termed half-caste, sons of European fathers and native mothers, existing in an infant state of society, for the advancement of which no hopes can be entertained except through the adoption of gradual measures for their instruction: but these, in his opinion, would be frustrated by the establishment of a free press, irritating that impatience and discontent which they still feel at their condition, though much has been already done to improve it: both these classes, however, as he observed, sink into comparative insignificance, when we contemplate the effects of a free press on a native population of 80,000,000. That population is separated into two great divisions, Mahometans and Hindoos: the higher ranks of the former, who, before us, were masters of almost all India, naturally remain discontented with our power: yet they bear but a small proportion to the latter, who possess this striking feature in their condition; that all their religious and civil classes are not only educated, but as prompt and skilful in intrigue as in business: from their intellectual superiority, they have always influenced and directed their more numerous and ignorant countrymen; but these instructed classes, especially the Brahmins, who have already lost consideration, wealth, and power, by our assumption of the government, fear, and justly fear, lest their degradation should be progressive: they are, at the same time, great adepts in spreading discontent, and exciting sedition or rebellion, by awakening the fears, alarming the superstition, or rousing the pride of those whom they address; and whenever the time appears favor-

⁴ Speech at a general court of proprietors, July 9, 1824.

able, they foster and keep up a spirit of hostility against us, by means of circular letters and proclamations dispersed with incredible celerity over the country, portraying the English as usurpers, of a low caste; as tyrants, who have sought India with the sole view of robbing the natives, while they subvert their usages and destroy their religion: in particular, they appeal to the native troops, earnestly exhorting them, on various occasions, to rise and murder their tyrants. Can it then be supposed that their aversion and hostility to our sway would be abated by the representations of an unlicensed press? Would it be wise or politic to put such means into the hands of those who would use it for our destruction?

Unmoved, however, by any such views as these, Mr. Buckingham followed up a long course of aggression by hazarding some severe strictures on the measures of government, particularly in its transactions with the kingdom of Oude; and though he was aware of Mr. Adam's sentiments, and knew his resolution, he chose to try his strength with a new governor; supposing that such an one would be adverse to interfere in a case where he was, or might be thought to be, personally interested. 'But,' observes sir J. Malcolm, 'he showed little discernment in his appreciation of the character of him with whom he had to deal; a man whom no personal consideration could induce to evade a public duty. Mr. Adam, vested with the highest authority in India, was forced by this conduct to appear in contest with Mr. Buckingham, the self-created champion of British liberty; while not only the European community, but the natives also, were anxiously looking at their trial of strength. Was the issue of such a contest to be left doubtful for a moment?' Mr. Adam then, being determined to check the evil by a signal punishment, interdicted this great offender from pursuing his avocations, and sent him back to England: his banishment was followed by strict regulations of the press; and as lord Amherst, when he arrived at the seat of government, was determined to pursue rigorously the policy commenced by Mr. Adam, a breach of those regulations was met by the exile of Mr. Arnot also, who had been left by Mr. Buckingham to conduct the business of his journal. A subsequent instance of disrespect shown to authority, was punished by a withdrawal of his license from the Calcutta Journal; and for some time after this period, the public press manifested a spirit of decorum, with which no great fault could be found: an occasional letter from the chief secretary, pointing out the danger of a

contrary line of conduct, restrained the editors who had diverged into it, from proceeding too far.

The increasing liberality, however, of the times induced the court of proprietors at home to relax the rigorous observance of this system: a compensation was given to Mr. Arnot; and the Indian government saw those, whom in the strict observance of duty it had felt obliged to punish, patronised and rewarded: acts which it had adopted from the best motives were annulled in the most peremptory manner; and everything began to indicate a wish on the part of the honorable court to comply with popular clamor, and allow the discussion of public affairs through the press to be as free in India as in England: this led to regulations, the consequences of which are very problematical; but the administration of lord Amherst was distinguished by events more generally interesting, though perhaps in the end not more important: the principal of these was the Burmese war, the causes and origin of which first demand our notice.

The fierce and warlike nature of the Burmans, had constantly urged them on to conquests; and the atrocious cruelties which they were accustomed to exercise throughout the provinces subdued by their arms, induced the natives to take refuge, in great numbers, within the British territories. 'So early,' says sir John Malcolm, 'as in the government of lord Teignmouth, a Burmese general advanced into the province of Chittagong in pursuit of three criminals, and a force was sent to repel this violation of territory; but hostilities were prevented by his waiting on the English officer who commanded it, explaining his instructions, and pleading his motives: on his retiring the criminals were made over to him; when two were put to death by the most cruel tortures and the other again effected his escape. Subsequently to this occurrence, a tribe, called Mughs, in the province of Arracan, exasperated by intolerable oppression, passed over to our territories in such crowds as to cause alarm; and orders were sent to prohibit others from crossing the frontier: these commands, however, were but partially enforced; and when the miserable fugitives themselves were directed to withdraw, the reply of their leader was;—'We will not return to the Arracan country: if you choose to slaughter us here, we are ready to die; and if by force you drive us away, we will go and dwell in the jungles of the great mountains, which afford shelter to the wild beasts.'"

About the close of 1798, no less a number than 10,000

Mughhs rushed over the frontiers in a state of extreme agony and distress; and this swarm was followed by another, still greater; so that policy became enlisted on the side of humanity, in granting them at least a temporary asylum; and it was resolved to settle them on some extensive tracts of waste land in the province of Chittagong: moreover, as numbers were perishing by famine, government supplied them with food, and materials for constructing huts under the direction of captain Cox, who had been previously employed in a mission to the court of Ava. The Burmese authorities soon despatched an army of about 4000 men after these emigrants, which followed them into Chittagong; and, fortifying itself in the woods by means of a stockade, carried on for several weeks a petty warfare with our troops: to their threatening demands, however, that the runaways should be delivered up, it was replied, that no negotiation could be listened to before the Burmese troops should retire from our borders: after this, they repelled an attack of sepoys, but subsequently retreated within their own dominions; and lieutenant Hill was then sent to the governor of Arracan, for the purpose of attempting an amicable adjustment. At this period, captain Cox arrived, and found the strangers perishing in vast numbers; as many as twenty children dying daily: with a desire therefore of terminating such calamities, he recommended our government to settle them on a desert tract between the Ramoo river and the Naaf, where they might become a useful and industrious colony, instead of being dispersed, and impelled to lead a vagabond life: this plan was followed; and the principal settlement was named, after the projector, Cox's Bazaar. The Burmese monarch now despatched an embassy to lord Wellesley; who dismissed the envoy with explanations and satisfactory assurances of the friendly disposition of our government; declaring that the governor-general was ready at all times to deliver up acknowledged criminals, and to permit every one who desired it to return to his own country: at the same time, a proclamation was issued, forbidding any future immigrations into the British territory.

In 1800, however, the viceroy of Arracan peremptorily demanded an unconditional surrender of the Mughhs, with menaces of invasion if refused. The governor-general would have felt himself justified in resorting to arms on the occasion of this insult; but imagining that the Arracan chief might have acted without authority, he despatched lieutenant-colonel

Symes to the court of Ava, in 1802, to obtain correct information ; while he sent a respectable force under lieutenant-colonel Fenwick to protect the frontier of Chittagong. Colonel Symes, on his arrival, received a general assurance of friendly sentiments from the Burmese government ; and the question of the emigrants was not stirred for several years ; but when captain Canning was at Ava, in 1809, he discovered that the king had long entertained a design of conquering the provinces of Chittagong and Dacca.

In the year 1811 we began to experience evil consequences from the establishment of the Mugh colony on the borders of their native country ; by which means a restless desire of recovering their ancient rights and homes was kept alive in the hearts of that people. Some bold adventurers among them, under a daring chief, called Kingberring, commenced predatory attacks on the country of Arracan, which caused the Burmese troops to enter our territories, and gave rise to much complaint and recrimination. In 1813, a mission was sent to Calcutta from the viceroy of Pegu, professedly for the purpose of purchasing some sacred works of the Hindoos ; but its chief, instead of buying books, spent his time in secret intrigues, hostile to our government : another officer belonging to the Burmese sovereign solicited permission to visit Delhi, under a similar pretext ; but it being discovered that his real object was to raise a conspiracy among the native powers for the expulsion of the English, he was not allowed to proceed. In 1813, extensive rumors were afloat respecting active preparations for invasion ; and in September, lord Minto, by a menacing proclamation, endeavored to restrain the incursions of Kingberring and his desperate followers. Deputies, who had been sent from Pegu, to procure a surrender of the Mugh insurgents, delayed their departure till lord Hastings arrived, to whom they renewed their application, but without success : nor could they understand our motives ; or believe that the cause of humanity made us hesitate to deliver up offenders to the tortures prepared for them : lord Hastings, however, though he refused to give up some insurgent chiefs, whom he had taken and imprisoned, endeavored by other acts to convince the Burmese government of our anxiety to suppress every species of depredation on the Arracan territory ; and whenever freebooters fled for refuge to the forests, the Burmese were permitted to pursue them : but this did not satisfy the rajah of Arracan, who even went so far as to imprison an agent sent to him by Mr. Pechell, the chief magistrate at Chittagong. In the

beginning of 1815, Kingberring died; and it was hoped that this event might aid our efforts in repressing the excesses of his countrymen: but as these failed, a letter was sent in April, 1816, from the rajah of Ramere, governor of the Burmese frontier provinces, peremptorily demanding a surrender of all the Mugh emigrants, with threats of immediate hostilities in case of refusal: the letter was brought by the rajah's son, who haughtily declared that he must have 'an answer, not arguments.' Mr. Pechell, having transmitted this document to Calcutta, was ordered to reply in a conciliatory but firm tone; and to discover, if possible, what was the object of the court of Ava, in reviving this question concerning the Mughs: the governor, at the same time, addressed a letter to the viceroy of Pegu, observing, that the British government could not, without violating the principles of justice, deliver up a multitude which had sought its protection, some of whom had resided thirty years within our borders; but that no prohibition existed against the voluntary return of that people to their country. The viceroy was assured, that the death of Kingberring, the captivity of his principal associates, and the return of the Mughs to the peaceful pursuits of industry, rendered a renewal of disturbances very improbable; but that even increased vigilance should be used on our part to restrain them: 'the enlightened mind,' it was said, 'of his Burmese majesty would perceive the inutility of agitating a question, the farther discussion of which could lead to no results advantageous to either state.'

Soon afterwards, when Charipo, a notorious offender, had committed a daring robbery in the Burmese dominions, Mr. Pechell recommended that he should be given up, together with some of his most guilty associates, as the only method of deterring others from similar depredations: nevertheless, it was determined in council, that this could not be suffered; though a judge of circuit was sent to aid Mr. Pechell in trying the offenders; and his official opinion was, that the utmost punishment that could be inflicted on their ringleader, was an imprisonment of fourteen years.

The authorities in England had not been indifferent to these transactions, but expressed a hearty approbation of the conduct of their officers. In a letter to the supreme government, from the court of directors, dated January 6, 1815, the following passage occurred:—'We earnestly hope that you have not been driven to the necessity of delivering up Kingberring; because we observe that every Mugh who is suspected of being

his partisan is put to death; and that a whole village, containing about 2500 souls, was massacred on this account, when neither men, women, nor children were spared. If, for the sake of avoiding hostilities with the king of Ava, you have been compelled to adopt such a measure, we trust that Kingberring has been the sole person given up, and that none of his infatuated followers were included in the surrender.' Also, in another letter of the nineteenth of May, it was said:—'It pleases us to observe, that the magistrate was cautioned to avoid language that might be interpreted into a promise on the part of our government to deliver up the principal insurgents to the Burmese.' Subsequent communications, however, evincing the incorrigible conduct of the Mughls, and the serious results to which their aggressions might lead, effected a change in the sentiments of the court.

In 1818, the son of the rajah of Ramere arrived on a second mission at Chittagong, and expressed an anxious desire of proceeding to Calcutta with a letter to the governor-general, which his father had written under the express orders of the Burmese king, and of which he gave Mr. Pechell an authenticated copy. The sum of its contents may be thus stated:—'The countries of Chittagong and Dacca, Moorshedabad and Cassimbazar, do not belong to India: those countries are ours: the British government is faithless: this was not formerly the case. It is not your right to receive the revenues of those countries: it is proper that you should pay them to us: if you do not, we will destroy your country.'

The rajah of Ramere had in all probability counselled his Burmese majesty to wage war with our government, and that monarch thought the present period favorable to his views: it was also known that he held secret correspondence with the Mahrattas, and was prepared to assist them and the Pindarries by invading the frontier of Bengal: but before the mission could reach its destination, lord Hastings had triumphed over those predatory hordes; and the Burmese troops had sustained serious reverses in a conflict with the people of Siam: the course therefore adopted by his lordship, was to treat this communication as a gross forgery, and to send back the letter as a document fabricated in the august name of 'the king of all the elephants:' thus he escaped the necessity of noticing an insolent menace, to the great satisfaction of the Burmese sovereign himself.

Nothing was done to irritate the court of Ava during the administration of lord Hastings; nor did any serious incursions

of the Mugh emigrants take place after the death of Kingberring; yet the tone of communications made by the Burmese government and officers became more and more insolent; while our evident desire to avoid a rupture seemed only to provoke them to hostilities. This feeling on their part arose from a gross miscalculation of our resources as well as their own; and it is impossible to read official details of the correspondence, without a conviction, that the crisis which afterwards occurred, could not, under any circumstances, have been much longer deferred.

In June, 1819, Minderajee-praw, the Burmese monarch, terminated a long and prosperous reign of thirty-seven years; and the state paper, announcing his death, declared, 'that the immortal king had gone up to amuse himself in the celestial regions.' He was succeeded by a grandson; who, having been solemnly crowned on the second of November, at Ava, proceeded immediately to reduce under subjection the province of Cassay; by which conquest the Burmese frontiers were pushed forward to the eastern boundary of Bengal, Dinapore, the Sylhet hills, and ridges of Cachar: nor was it long before this close contact with our Indian empire led to fresh disputes. In 1822, a large body of the persecuted people of Assam emigrated into our territory; and as in the case of the Arracanese, were pursued by a formidable force sent to reclaim them: but the assurance that these refugees should be strictly kept from exercising any act of hostility, satisfied the Burmese commander for the present; while the attention of the monarch was wholly occupied with the reduction of Siam, the favorite object of his predecessors on the throne. In order to effect the final overthrow of that state, an effort was made to obtain the concurrence of the king of Cochin China; but whatever may have been the plans of attack, the relative frontiers remained unaltered, when the eventful contest broke out between the British government and the Burmese empire.⁵ After various petty acts of animosity, a body of the enemy, in September, 1823, took forcible possession of the island of

⁵ The extent of this empire is reckoned by Malte Brun to be about 1050 geographical miles in length, and 600 in breadth, containing probably 194,000 square miles. The population, the numbers of which are variously and vaguely estimated, consists of,—1. The proper Burmans of the Irrawaddy; 2. The Talain or Peguans; 3. The Siamese of the conquered provinces; 4. The Kiayn of the western mountains; 5. The Arracanese of the coast; 6. The Karayn, a tribe of cultivators; 7. The Cassayers, or Kathee people; beside several tribes in the mountains and on the frontiers.

Shapuree; but the invaders were expelled, and an explanation was demanded: their next act of hostility was the advance of 2000 men, for the purpose of restoring the deposed rajah of Cachar, who had sought refuge within the Burmese dominions: Ghumbur Sing, his successor, was supported by the British; and the country had been for some time under our protection. These acts, therefore, together with the contemptuous silence preserved by the court of Ava against every remonstrance on the subject, were the ostensible causes of the war; and early in this year, (1824,) orders were given for equipping a force of 5000 or 6000 men, at the presidencies of Fort William and St. George, under the respective orders of brigadier-general M'Creagh, and brigadier-general Macbean: the two divisions were directed to assemble at Port Cornwallis, in the Great Andaman island; whence the combined forces, under major-general sir Archibald Campbell, were to proceed to attack Rangoon, the principal sea-port of the Burmese. The naval force attached to this expedition, consisted of the *Liffey*, of fifty guns, commodore Grant; *Slaney*, twenty, captain C. Mitchell; *Larne*, twenty, captain F. Marryat; and *Sophie*, eighteen, captain G. F. Ryves; four of the honorable company's cruisers, under captain H. Hardy, with various brigs, schooners, and other small craft, manned by *Lascars*; twenty row-boats, each carrying an eighteen-pounder at the bow, under the command of Mr. W. Lindquist, of the Bengal pilot service; and the *Diana* steam vessel, the first ever seen in India, which had been purchased by the supreme government at the particular request of captain Marryat. The total number of fighting men embarked at Calcutta and Madras was 8071; 4077 being British troops. On the fifth of May this expedition put to sea; when a part of the force was detached under general M'Creagh against the island of Cheduba, and another under major Wahab against Negrais: the rest of the fleet, on the eleventh of May, led by the *Liffey* and *Larne*, sailed up the Rangoon river, without any pilots on board; and, in a few hours, anchored off the town. As the place was utterly unprepared for resistance, its governor, after a cannonade from the principal battery, which was quickly silenced by the *Liffey*, directed the whole mass of inhabitants to be driven into the inmost recesses of the jungle, regardless of the inevitable misery attendant on so barbarous a measure: the wretched mud houses of the city were abandoned to the invaders, while everything that could serve for provision was removed far beyond their reach; and the few British merchants and

American missionaries resident at the place, who had been placed in strict confinement, and threatened with death, were marched in fetters a few miles into the country, and lodged near the great pagoda;⁶ but these were soon delivered by the advanced guard of the British army. The greatest distress was experienced by our troops from this system, constantly pursued, of driving away the inhabitants, and leaving the whole country destitute of provisions.

Our army came unprovided with sufficient equipment for advancing by land or by water; for it was imagined that the capture of Rangoon, or at least of that and the enemy's other maritime possessions, would induce the king to accept the moderate demands of our government; or, at all events, that the country would afford sufficient water transport to enable a considerable corps to proceed up the Irrawaddy; especially as the co-operation of the people of Pegu, a conquered tribe governed by despotic and mercenary chiefs, was confidently relied on: but it soon appeared that we had been deceived by erroneous accounts: that we had to expect decided hostility from both Burmese and Peguans; that the boatmen of the great river, being in a peculiar manner devoted to their monarch, had removed every vessel that could be serviceable, while we had brought very few in our train. Such were the situation and prospects of our army at the commencement of the rainy season; the longest that is experienced in any part of India, and during which no troops can remain in the field twenty-four hours together: it was also kept in constant alarm by nightly irruptions of the enemy into its lines; without having any means of transporting a single gun, and without a hope of inducing the wretched inhabitants, who had been driven into the jungles, to return into the town: the chief command, however, had been given to an officer of great ability and zeal, who was ably seconded both in the military and naval department: in such a case, what are the obstacles which a British army will not surmount?

The court of Ava had been for many months preparing, not

⁶ This magnificent building, called the Shoedagon, stands at the summit of an abrupt eminence, about two miles and a half from Rangoon. The conical hill itself is seventy-five feet above the road: the area on its top is upwards of two acres, in the centre of which space the pagoda is erected; in shape resembling an inverted speaking trumpet, 338 feet in height, surmounted by a cap made of brass, forty-five feet high: the whole being richly gilt.—See Snodgrass's *History of the Burmese War*, p. 15.

only for a rupture with our government, but even for offensive operations: the invasion, however, of its own territories, especially of the distant coasts of Pegu and Tenasserim, was overlooked in its warlike plans; and when his Burmese majesty was told that such a thing was likely to occur, he replied, in the true Eastern style;—‘As to Rangoon, I will take such measures as shall prevent the English from even disturbing the women cooking their rice:’⁷ as soon, therefore, as our actual disembarkation became known, no time was lost in making vigorous preparations for our expulsion; every village and town within 300 miles of the seat of war being obliged to send its complement of armed men, under their respective chiefs; while the Irrawaddy was covered with fleets of warriors from all the towns on its banks, proceeding to the general rendezvous of the grand army.

The first conflict took place on the sixteenth of May; when captain R. Birch, with the grenadier company of his majesty’s thirty-eighth regiment, embarked on board the Liffey’s boats, commanded by lieutenant James Wilkinson, for the purpose of dislodging the enemy from the village of Kemmendine, a war-boat station three miles above Rangoon; and although the impenetrable jungle and other obstacles prevented the complete success of this little band, yet they gallantly stormed several strong stockades, one of which was defended by 400 men, who were quickly driven out at the point of the bayonet, leaving behind them sixty dead. ‘The enemy,’ says captain Richards, ‘were well armed, a great proportion having muskets; and a small field-piece was taken in the stockade. I must do them the justice to say, that they fought with great spirit; many of them receiving our charge bravely on their spears.’ In this contest, lieutenant T. Kerr and one private were killed, and nine wounded; while lieutenant Wilkinson, R.N., received a ball through his thigh, and eight or nine of his crew were wounded. On the thirty-first, captain Marryat succeeded to the chief command of the naval force, as commodore Grant retired, on account of ill health, to Pulo Penang, where he died in July following.

Towards the end of May, the enemy had become more daring, as their numbers increased; and gradually approaching the British position, began to throw up stockades⁸ in the jungle, within hearing of our advanced posts: in the formation and

⁷ Snodgrass, p. 25.

⁸ Strong enclosures formed of the trunks of trees, mounted with cannon, and pierced for musketry: in the interior they often dig

defence of this kind of fortification the Burmese are instructed and trained from early youth ; and they display in it so much skill and judgment, that for many years their wars have been a regular series of conquests.

Their approaches met with every possible encouragement from the British commander ; who, being unable to attempt any distant operation, was anxious to come into close contact with his antagonists. On the morning of the twenty-eighth, an advanced corps being stockaded within little more than musket-shot distance from our piquets, sir Archibald Campbell, taking four companies of Europeans, and 400 native infantry, with two field-pieces, moved out to reconnoitre : his advance-guard soon came on the first stockade thrown across the path ; but the work being incomplete, its defenders retired, after exchanging a few shots. The column, continuing its march, found at every turn of the road breastworks and half-finished stockades hastily abandoned, since this early visit was not anticipated : a progress of about five miles brought our troops to a narrow wooden bridge over a morass, where the enemy was beginning to form : this had just been forced by the fire of artillery, when one of those tremendous storms, which usher in the south-west monsoon, came on ; and as the field-pieces could be dragged no farther, our general left them in charge of the native infantry, and advanced, with his European troops, through the tempest. The enemy soon appeared in large bodies ; and their chiefs, on horseback, were seen forming their men to defend a gorge in front ; while this small body of Europeans continued to advance, by *échellon* of companies, against a force of 4000 or 5000 men : our left flank, which moved close to the jungle, found some villages defended in front by two stockades, whence proceeded shouts of defiance from men confident in themselves and in the strength of their position : they at once commenced a heavy fire on our leading companies ; and these, unable to return it, owing to the wet state of their muskets, instantly resolved to close with their opponents ; the right company being directed to keep its line firm on the plain, while the other three rushed impetuously on the works : those, being of a low description, not exceeding eight feet in height, were soon forced ; and the very numbers of the enemy, by creating disorder, increased their destruction. The conflict was fierce and sanguinary : each stockade having only one or two narrow ways of egress, its defenders, when

holes, into which the defenders retire ; so that a work full of men appears to be deserted.

driven from the ramparts, soon became an unmanageable mass ; and being rendered desperate by repeated volleys, they were seen, with spear or musket couched, and heads lowered to a butting position, blindly charging on our bayonets ; for until they had been taught by severe retaliation to treat with mercy those whom the fortune of war threw into their power, the Burmese neither gave nor expected quarter ; continuing to fight with the utmost fury long after all hope of success or escape had vanished : nor did it remain optional with our men to spare the lives of an enemy, from whose barbarous mode of warfare death alone afforded safety ; the experiment was often tried, but tried in vain : humanity might prompt a British soldier to pass a fallen or a vanquished foe ; but when he found his forbearance rewarded by a shot, or the spear's point, as soon as his back was turned, self-preservation taught him the necessity of more decisive measures.

During the attack on these two stockades, the Burmese general in the plain made no movement for their defence, probably supposing that we had a larger force intentionally kept out of sight ; but as soon as our troops were seen in possession of the works, the whole line, with a horrid yell, began to advance, until checked by the company which had been left, and by the appearance of the troops which had carried the works moving forward to receive these new opponents : our killed and wounded were then carried from the field, and the little band marched back unmolested to their quarters : after this action, an attempt at negotiation, or rather at deception, was tried by the enemy, while they were occupied in erecting fortifications. A large body had taken post at Kemmendine, the station for war-boats, three miles up the river, with elevated ground and forests in its rear : this also was attacked by our troops, assisted by the naval force ; and several strong stockades were carried with great gallantry : some days of quiet then ensued : but all the towns and villages continued to be deserted : the herds were swept from the plain, and the boats from the rivers, whilst every man beyond our posts was in arms against us. Before the end of June, the enemy recovered from their panic ; and, having received large reinforcements, advanced again under Sykia Wongee, third minister of state ; when the jungles seemed to be animated by living masses ; and their noisy preparations formed a remarkable contrast with the stillness and quiet of the British lines ; our force, much diminished through sickness and death, was recruited by the eighty-ninth British regiment from Madras, and the junction of

detachments that had been sent to the capture of Cheduba and Negrais ; which places soon fell into our hands.

In the beginning of July, a battle took place round the great pagoda, to the disadvantage of the Burmese, and Sykia Wongee was recalled in disgrace ; but his successor, Soomba Wongee, the second minister, though he fought with determined bravery, and placed his troops in the strongest possible stockades, lost his life, as well as 800 men in the fortifications ; while the jungles and villages around were filled with unhappy wretches left there to perish. Soon afterwards, the rains were at their height, and the adjacent lands almost wholly under water : in the mean time an expedition was sent to the eastward, under colonel Miles ; when Tavoy surrendered, Mergui was taken by storm, and the whole coast of Tenasserim gladly accepted British protection.

To inspire confidence in the people after their recent defeats, and to keep the officers strictly to their duty, the princes of Tonghoo and Irrawaddy, brothers of the king, were ordered down from Ava ; when the first of these established his headquarters at Pegu ; and the latter at Donoobew, on the river, about sixty miles from Rangoon ; where fortifications had been thrown up with great care, to form a post of reserve, and a dépôt for the army. The princes came, accompanied by numerous astrologers, as well as by a corps called the king's invulnerables, men curiously tattooed, and accustomed to exhibit the war-dance of defiance, and expose themselves to the hottest fire of an enemy, that they might inspire courage in the rest. A few skirmishes took place occasionally ; but several weeks elapsed before the astrologers could mark out a propitious day for attacking our position : at length, the night of the thirtieth of August was fixed on, when the invulnerables promised to assault and carry the great pagoda, that the princes and grandes might celebrate the grand annual festival in that sacred place : accordingly, on the night in question, they advanced in a compact body, armed with swords and muskets, uttering clamorous imprecations against the impious strangers ; being guided by a few glimmering lanterns, toward the northern gateway : at length, the darkness was broken by vivid flashes from our guns ; showers of grape-shot, and successive volleys of musketry, fell among the invulnerables, making such havoc in their dense masses, that, no longer endeavouring to support their character, they fled from the scene of action, and sought safety in the neighboring jungle.

The time was now arrived when the defeats and disasters of

the Burmese army could be no longer concealed, and when it was necessary to repair the loss of honor which it had sustained. In this emergency, his majesty had recourse to the most celebrated of all his generals; one to whom the empire was indebted for some of its most valuable acquisitions; and who had proceeded, before our expedition reached Rangoon, to take the command of an Arracan army, destined for the invasion of Bengal; nor had he neglected to provide golden fetters, in which the governor-general of India might be led captive to Ava. This officer, called Maha Bandoola, on his arrival in Arracan, quickly commenced offensive operations; and, having pushed his forces as far as Ramoo, surrounded a detachment, consisting of five companies of the twenty-third native infantry, three of the thirtieth, and some provincials, with the Mugh levy, and artillery; when he overwhelmed and routed the whole force. The highest alarm was excited in Bengal by this victory; the peasants fled in dismay from their villages; and the native merchants of Calcutta were with difficulty persuaded to remain with their families and property under the protection of Fort William; the enemy, however, did not advance beyond Ramoo; but employed themselves in erecting stockades, which Bandoola intended as the basis of his future operations, at the return of the cool season. The defeats, however, of the Burmese army in the vicinity of Rangoon, and the reduction of Martaban, Mergui, and Tanasserim, induced his sovereign to recall him for the defence of the golden empire: thus the inhabitants of Bengal were relieved from their anxiety; the war was transferred to the central provinces of Burmah; and the grand struggle took place on the banks of the mighty Irrawaddy.

Soon after the retreat of Bandoola, the state of British India became alarming from another source. The company's native troops had generally imbibed a superstitious terror of the Burmese; and several regiments, stationed at Barrackpore, covering their aversion for the service under various pretexts of grievances, refused to march, and broke out into open mutiny; it was, however, subdued by the promptitude of sir Edward Paget, who placed himself at the head of two British regiments and a company of artillery; with which, after some fruitless endeavors to recall the mutineers to their duty, he attacked and dispersed them, when drawn up in line, under a declared resolution of opposing force to force. Considerable numbers of these misguided men fell by the discharges of artillery; but of those taken, twelve only were executed;

the sentence of the rest being commuted for hard labor in irons during fourteen years : nothing less could have averted the danger of an example, which threatened to shake our Indian empire to its foundation.

The arrival of Maha Bandoola at Ava, where the highest honors and chief military command were conferred on him, was speedily communicated to the crest-fallen levies in front of the British station ; where his name not only restored confidence, but acted as a spell to draw the reluctant people round his banners : in the mean time, whilst a large fleet of war-boats, with a train of artillery, was preparing to fall down the river, and orders were issued for detachments to join Bandoola on his progress, the endemic fever of the rainy season, and a severe dysentery were thinning the British ranks, and filling their hospitals : in this situation, it was happily determined to move the sufferers to Mergui and Tavoy, where the salubrity of the climate effected wonders. 'Men,' says major Snodgrass, 'who had for months remained in a most debilitated state at Rangoon, rapidly recovered on arriving at Mergui, and were soon restored in full health and vigor to their duty.' Negotiations were now entered into with the Siamese government : but though feuds and enmity had ever existed between them and the Burmese state, the Siamese had suffered too much from their foes, and were too strongly convinced of our impotence against the dreaded Burmans, to join us in active hostilities.

On the eleventh of September, the *Arachne* was reported off the bar : captain Marryat, with only twenty-seven of his original ship's company on board, was then dropping down from Rangoon ; but he delayed two days, in order to give captain Chads every information in his power. The important command held by captain Marryat under such peculiar circumstances had been exercised in a manner most creditable to that officer ; who did not give over his charge to captain Ryves, until the enemy had been decidedly repulsed ; so that sir Archibald Campbell officially stated his conviction, that two sloops, the *Sophie* and *Satellite*, were sufficient to protect the shipping : he was promoted into the *Tees* by captain Coe, when that officer, who had lately arrived, assumed the command of the *Liffey* ; and captain Chads was now invested with the chief direction of the naval force attached to the expedition.

In the early part of November, the rains having ceased, the health of our army became re-established ; the cool season had set in ; and a forward movement was anticipated with joy

by the troops; but before this could take place, the whole military force of Ava, now advancing on Rangoon, was to be disposed of: seasonable reinforcements, however, were sent from Calcutta; and a regiment of cavalry, a troop of horse-artillery, and a rocket corps were ordered to join. The Burmese army, the largest and best equipped that had ever been sent into the field, consisted of 35,000 musketeers, great numbers of whom were armed with jingals, a small but annoying piece, carrying a ball from six to twelve ounces in weight, and mounted on a carriage, which two men could easily move about: the Cassay horse amounted to 700; and a considerable body of men were attached to the guns; the rest of the force, making a sum total of 60,000 men, being armed with short swords and long spears, which by the great physical strength of the Burmese are rendered very formidable weapons: but the army would not have been thought complete without the addition of some corps of invulnerables; who, being amply provided with charms, spells, and opium, afforded in the ensuing operations great amusement to our soldiers, by their dances of defiance, committing all sorts of extravagances, with a prodigal exposure of their lives.⁹

At length, this congregated force assembled, on the thirtieth of November, in the extensive forest of Rangoon, fronting the great Shoedagon pagoda; and its line, extending from the river above Kemmeline in a semicircular direction toward Puzendown, was to be discerned by volumes of smoke rising from the different bivouacs: during the following night, the low hum of voices, proceeding from this encampment, suddenly ceased; and was succeeded by the distant but gradually increasing sounds of a multitude in slow and stealthy movement through the woods: our commanders soon became aware that the enemy's masses had approached to the very edge of the jungle, within musket-shot of the pagoda, ready to rush from their cover at break of day. In the morning a number of war-boats had been observed by the Teignmouth stealing down the river; and in the evening, they came forward with fire-rafts; which induced captain Goodridge to slip and pass the point in order to avoid them: this left the post open at a furious attack by land and water; but it was nobly defended by the garrison, under major Yates, consisting of the twenty-sixth Madras native infantry, and a mere handful of Europeans, supported on the river by a small naval force.

⁹ See Snodgrass, p. 96.

The morning of the first of December had scarcely dawned, when hostilities commenced with a heavy fire of musketry and cannon at Kemmendine, where the Teignmouth was again unfortunately driven from her station by fire-rafts; and our troops, at the great pagoda, could distinctly hear the yells and shouts of the infuriated assailants, occasionally returned by hearty cheers from the British seamen, as they poured their heavy broadsides into the resolute and persevering masses: when the firing ceased, and the thick canopy of smoke dispersed, the masts of our vessels were seen at their old station off the fort. In the course of the forenoon, Burmese columns appeared on the west side of the river, marching in five or six divisions, under numerous chiefs, whose gilt *chattahs*, or umbrellas, glittered in the sun; and when they reached the bank opposite to Rangoon, they began to erect stockades and batteries for the destruction of our shipping: later in the day several heavy columns were seen issuing out of the forest, with flags and banners, about a mile from the eastern face of the pagoda; and different corps, successively taking up their positions along a sloping woody ridge, formed the left of the line; the centre of which extended from the pagoda to Kemmendine: thus the British forces were nearly surrounded. When this presumptuous position was occupied, a singular kind of operation commenced; for the troops, laying aside their arms, began to ply their intrenching tools with such activity and skill, that in about two hours their whole line had disappeared, and could only be traced by a mound of new earth gradually increasing in height: behind such a parapet, the moving masses which so lately attracted attention, had sunk into the ground, as by enchantment; and the existence of these subterranean legions could hardly have been credited, but for the occasional movement of a chief, with his gilt *chattah*, superintending the works: they were, however, soon taught the danger of such manœuvres before a British army; for a detachment forced their intrenchments, coming on them almost unperceived; and having driven the whole line from cover, retired unmolested from the numerous bodies that were now forming on all sides.

The trenches were discovered to be a succession of holes, capable of receiving two men each, and excavated so as to shelter their occupants from the weather, as well as from the fire of an enemy: every hole contained also a sufficient supply of rice, water, and even fuel, for its inmates; while under the

excavated bank, a bed of straw or of brushwood was prepared, on which one man could sleep, while the other kept watch. In the course of the evening, the Burmese re-occupied their trenches, which they protected by a strong corps: during the day, repeated attacks on Kemmendine had been made and repulsed, chiefly through the gallant conduct of captain Chads, his officers, and the crews of vessels, who lent every possible assistance to our troops; but it was not till darkness had set in, that the last desperate effort was made against that post: already had the wearied soldiers laid themselves down to rest, when suddenly the whole heavens were illuminated by the blaze of several tremendous fire-rafts, floating with an ebb tide down the river, amidst incessant peals of cannon and musketry, and followed by war-boats eager to take advantage of the confusion that might ensue: the skill and intrepidity, however, of British seamen defeated all these contrivances; for, entering their boats, they grappled the flaming rafts, and conducted them past the shipping, or ran them ashore: on the land side, also, the enemy were defeated with a heavy loss in the most resolute attempt as yet made to reach the interior of our station.

At daylight, on the second, the Burmese were observed still busy in every part of their line; and they soon intrenched themselves within musket-shot of the northern face of the great pagoda: as their fire could now be brought to bear on the very barracks of our soldiers, it became necessary to dislodge them from particular points; and however bold they appeared under cover, it was found that at the decisive charge they quailed before the courage of European troops. The series of attacks and combats, manifesting great spirit in the enemy's soldiers, and considerable skill in their general, lasted seven days: the left wing of their army, though defeated with much slaughter, merely retreated on their right; and the struggle was renewed until that division also was routed with a loss of 5000 men, and an immense store of artillery: still undismayed, 25,000 men, the remnant of this vast army rallied, and intrenched themselves within four miles of the great pagoda, at the village of Kokeen, with 'a judgment,' as sir A. Campbell observes, 'that would have done credit to engineers of the most civilized and warlike nation.' From this post, however, they were driven, after several brilliant exploits, in which the operations of our army were powerfully seconded by the flotilla.

Not satisfied with military manœuvres, the Burmese now

had recourse to negotiations of the most treacherous and deceitful nature; priding themselves on the success of a lie, and not showing the slightest symptoms of shame at detection and exposure: besides, as an immense number of inhabitants had returned to Rangoon, they introduced incendiaries into that town, who lighted up a conflagration which destroyed more than one-fourth of the place, and was only extinguished by extraordinary efforts: during the whole of this time, our vessels and their boats were occupied in destroying terrific fire-rafts; which, in general, were about 100 feet square, composed of dried wood, piled up with oil, turpentine, gunpowder, and other combustibles. In January, 1825, the Burmese generalissimo was found to have stationed himself at Donoobew, about fifty miles up the river; where, having drawn to his army all the resources of Pegu, he prepared himself to sustain an attack: it was now determined by the British commander to advance into the interior of the empire, though his invading force was still small, and his Siamese allies were not yet inclined to take an active part in operations: on the thirteenth of February, sir Archibald joined the camp at Mienza, passing through forests lined for many miles by formidable stockades, where the enemy had lain during the inclement season: along the whole line of march, our army found the country deserted, and the villages destroyed; their inhabitants being most cruelly treated by the Burmese chiefs. On the twenty-sixth, his majesty's ship, *Alligator*, arrived at Rangoon; and captain Chads, who had been hitherto acting on his own responsibility, was superseded in his command by captain Alexander.

On the twenty-sixth, our troops arrived at Soomza, after marching fourteen miles through a magnificent forest, where most of the trees, in point of size and straightness, would have made mainmasts for the largest ships: the governor of this place had retired from his post; but being apprehensive of punishment for not opposing us with more resolution, he sent several messages, expressing his anxiety to come in and place himself under British protection: watched, however, as he was by numerous spies, and wandering about in constant fear for his life, he could find no opportunity of eluding the vigilance of his guards. One of these vile assassins at last came up to the unhappy man with a pretended letter of forgiveness from the prince of Irrawaddy; and while his victim was in the act of reading it, severed his head from his body.¹⁰

In the mean time Donoobew was attacked by a division

¹⁰ Snodgrass, p. 149.

under brigadier-general Cotton, and its outworks were carried in gallant style ; but the main work was discovered to be too strong to risk a farther advance, and our troops were for a time withdrawn. By the eighteenth of March, general Campbell had performed an arduous task ; crossing the Irrawaddy to the west bank, with his whole force, in a few canoes of the country : by making roads, and other labors, he reached Donoobew on the twenty-fifth, and found there his old adversary, Maha Bandoola, at the head of 15,000 veterans, with fortifications well mounted and manned ; while a numerous cavalry hovered on the British flanks, and everything about the stockades betokened order and confidence. On the second of April, the British camp was pitched before these extensive works ; and a heavy fire, which the enemy had kept up all the morning, intirely ceased : but there was something in this calm which foreboded a coming storm ; accordingly, about ten o'clock, when the moon was fast verging toward the horizon, a sharp sound of musketry, mingled with war cries, roused our sleeping camp ; and the wearied soldiers, mechanically seizing their muskets, instantly formed a line : this was scarcely done, when the opposing columns advanced impetuously with an intention of turning our right ; at the same time keeping up a distant fire against the left and centre. On their outflanking the right, our two extreme regiments changed front, and, by a constant discharge of musketry, checked every attack ; so that the assailants returned in hopeless silence to their irritated commander, to receive the general reward of failure on such occasions.

After various petty actions, by river as well as by land, the mortar-batteries and rockets began their work of destruction on the first of April ; and on the second, at daybreak, the breaching batteries opened, when two Lascars, who had been left prisoners in the fort, came running out to inform our commander that Bandoola had been killed the day before by a rocket, and that no intreaties of the other chiefs could prevail on the garrison to remain ; but the whole had dispersed and fled the preceding night : this information was found quite correct ; for the enemy had retired with so much secresy and haste, that not a gun was removed ; and even a large dépôt of grain was left uninjured. During the whole of these operations, very effective service was rendered by the navy ; which assisted in forcing stockades, capturing formidable war-boats, and conveying troops to the best places of attack : both captains, Alexander and Chads, merited and received high praise for their exertions from the commander-in-chief.

After the dispersion of Bandoola's forces, Prome was considered the only point where the invading army could be stopped; and there the utmost energies of local authorities were employed in fortifying the place and organising a force. New generals were called out, and a numerous artillery was on its way from Ava, to occupy the summits of the surrounding hills; in a word, the whole disposable force of the empire was concentrating itself at a spot, memorable for many sanguinary battles fought there with the people of Pegu: all these preparations, however, were wholly disconcerted by the rapid movement of our army, which, at daylight on the twenty-fifth, found itself under the ridge of hills that cover Prome to the south; each being stockaded to its very summit: but the fortifications were unoccupied; the enemy had evacuated every post; and our leading column, pushing on to the city, found it in a conflagration: every exertion, however, was immediately made to extinguish the flames, which were at length got under, after numerous habitations had been destroyed. If some negotiations which the deceitful chiefs entered into with our commander had occasioned a delay of only two days, according to their wishes, Prome would not have been taken without an immense sacrifice of lives. The troops which accompanied the prince of Irrawaddy in his flight burned and laid waste every village in their route, driving thousands of helpless people from their houses to the woods: this now became the plan of warfare; and even Russia, in her memorable resistance to the French armies, did not offer to invading hosts such a scene of desolation: neither man nor beast escaped the retiring columns; and heaps of ashes, with groups of howling dogs, alone indicated the spots where villages and towns had stood. While these important movements occurred, a series of brilliant and sharply contested actions had put the British in possession of Arracan: from Cachar also and Assam the Burmese were totally expelled; and thus terminated the second campaign of this bloody and devastating war. Prome, where our army took up its quarters for the rainy season, is 120 miles from Rangoon, but still distant 250 from Ava: cantonments were there prepared for the troops, and the inhabitants invited by every encouragement to revisit their habitations; so that the poor wretches now came from all quarters, in a starving condition: a dépôt was then formed, large fleets of canoes were constructed, carts and cattle for the transport of commissariat stores were provided, and due preparations made for the ensuing campaign: nor was

the Burmese court and its infatuated monarch idle ; for his bad advisers prevailed, and all the overtures of our general were treated with contempt : troops were now levied in every part of the kingdom ; even large bounties, a thing unheard of before, were given ; and the tributary Shan tribes, bordering on China, were called on to furnish their contingent force : 1500 men of this nation, headed by their *chobwas*, or chiefs, arrived in full hope of sharing the plunder of the conquered invaders ; so that before the end of September, a disposable army of 70,000 men was ready to act against the different columns which threatened an advance against the capital. On the twenty-second of September, sir James Brisbane, who had been appointed to succeed commodore Grant in command of his majesty's Indian squadron, arrived at Prome, bringing with him the boats and seamen of the *Boadicea* frigate to augment our flotilla ; the command of which he entrusted to that active and intelligent officer, captain Chads : previous to the final struggle, commissioners met to discuss terms of pacification ; but where there was no honesty on one side, and no want of penetration on the other, all proposals failed. A line of demarcation had been settled, and an armistice agreed on ; but the Burmese troops soon began to transgress both the one and the other ; and our terms being haughtily rejected, they prepared to engage us, by advancing on Prome in three divisions : the right, under Sudda Woon, consisting of 15,000 men, having crossed the Irrawaddy, moved along its western bank, intending to intercept us in the rear ; the centre, of about 30,000, commanded by the Kee Wongee, or head minister, advanced along the eastern side with numerous war-boats and stores ; while the left, also 15,000 strong, under Maha Nemiow, a famous old general, who had the chief direction of the army, moved by a route about ten miles distant from the river, and separated from it by an extensive forest. In addition to these corps, there was a reserve of 10,000 men, commanded by the king's half-brother, prince Memiaboo, occupying a strongly-fortified post at Melloone ; also another force was ready to oppose any movement from Arracan ; and Sykia Wongee still carried on a desultory warfare in the vicinity of Pegu, threatening also Rangoon. The effective British force to contend with these formidable enemies, consisted only of 5000 men, beside a garrison to maintain Prome ; and of these only 3000 were Europeans : but some native regiments were opposed to Sykia Wongee, and others were in garrison at Rangoon.

In the first engagement between our advanced guard and Maha Nemiow's division, the British suffered severely; their commander, colonel M'Dowall, was slain; and the troops were obliged to retreat. Encouraged by this success, the old general marched directly on Prome, but with great caution; stockading his troops at every mile of his advance, while a corresponding movement was made by the other divisions; and the central corps was now distinctly observed from our quarters, fortifying the heights of Napadee, above the river, about five miles distant: seeing little prospect of a speedy crisis in the cautious tactics of his adversary, sir A. Campbell resolved at once to become the assailant.

The corps of Maha Nemiow had for some days been stationary close to Prome, strengthening its position, and observing the utmost vigilance: about 8000 of his men were Shans, whose confidence had not yet been shaken by contact with our troops; and in addition to a numerous list of *chobwas* and petty princes, these levies were accompanied by three young and beautiful women of high rank, believed by their superstitious countrymen to be endowed with the gift of prophecy, and to possess the miraculous power of turning aside musket balls: these Amazons, dressed in warlike apparel, rode among the troops, inspiring them with an ardent desire to meet a foe, known to them as yet only by the deceitful account of their Burmese masters.¹¹

On the thirtieth of November, arrangements were made to attack the enemy's forces next morning; commodore sir James Brisbane, with the flotilla, being directed to cannonade their posts on both sides of the river at daylight; while a body of native infantry should make a feigned attack on their centre, as the columns were marching out for the real attack on their left at Simbike: for this purpose our principal force was formed into two columns; one, under brigadier-general Cotton, marching by the direct road; while the other, led by the commander-in-chief, crossed the Nawine river, and moved along its right bank, to come round on the Burmese rear, and to cut off all retreat. Our troops had scarcely commenced their march, when a furious and well-directed cannonade on the river completely deceived the enemy, drew off his piquets, and left his position open to assault: the advance of general Cotton's column was opposed by a succession of stockades thrown across an open space in the centre of the jungle, having the Nawine river in the rear, a thick wood on either flank, and assailable

¹¹ Snodgrass, p. 231.

only in front, where the assailants were exposed to cross fires from the zigzag formation of the works : our troops, however, moved on with their usual intrepidity ; while the Shans, encouraged by the presence of their veteran commander, who was carried from place to place in a gilded litter, cheered also by the exhortations and gallant bearing of their Amazons, offered a brave resistance : but no sooner was a lodgment made in their crowded works, than, unable to stop the progress of the assailants, or to stand against the volleys of musketry, they fell into utter dismay and confusion. Horses and men ran wildly from side to side, trying to avoid the murderous fire ; parties were employed to break an outlet from their own enclosures ; while the gray-headed *chobwas* set a splendid example of valor to their followers, singly maintaining the contest sword in hand, refusing quarter, and attacking all who approached even with the most humane intentions. Maha Nemiow himself fell bravely fighting ; and his body, together with his sword, his Wongee's chain, and other insignia, were found among the slain : one of the fair Amazons also received a bullet in her breast ; and being recognised, was carried to a cottage in the rear, where she expired. In the mean time, sir A. Campbell's column, pushing rapidly on, met the flying foe in the rear, and opened a deadly fire from our horse artillery : another of the Shan ladies was here observed retreating on horseback with her defeated troops ; but before she could gain the opposite bank of the Nawine river, a Shrapnel shell exploded over her head ; when, falling from her horse, she was carried off by her attendants.¹²

The British commander was now enabled to attack the enemy's centre before the defeat of their left wing was generally known : in this operation he was completely successful ; being greatly assisted by our flotilla, which, during the attack, rapidly passed the works, and captured all the boats and stores brought down for the enemy's troops. The division of Sadda Woon, protected by the intervention of the Irrawaddy, now alone remained ; but this was attacked by a party conveyed across the stream by ships ; its stockades were forced ; and the whole corps, broken up and dispersed, fled in all directions through the woods.

It was now determined to advance on Ava ; and nothing was wanting in the troops, or forgotten by their leader, to ensure success ; but the enemy did not even yet despair : the stockades at Meaday had been made as strong as art could make them ;

¹² Snodgrass, p. 236.

and at Melloone, on the west bank of the Irrawaddy, the reserve under prince Memiaboo was augmented to 15,000 men; while its defences were represented as a *chief-d'œuvre* of Burmese fortification. On the ninth of December, our first division, with the commander-in-chief, began its march; and on the nineteenth arrived at Meaday; 'where,' says major Snodgrass, 'a dreadful scene of misery and death awaited them: within and around the stockades, the ground was strewn with dead and dying, the victims of wounds, disease and want: here and there a small white pagoda marked the spot where some man of rank was interred; while numerous new-made graves denoted, that what was seen was only a small remnant of their dead which the hurried departure of the enemy had left unburied. The beach and neighboring jungles were filled with dogs and vultures; whose growling and screams, in addition to the pestilential smell of the place, rendered our situation far from pleasant: but as if this scene of death was not sufficient, fresh horrors were added to it by the sanguinary leaders of the unfortunate Burmese: several gibbets were found erected about the stockades, each bearing the mouldering remains of three or four crucified victims; thus cruelly put to death, for perhaps no greater crime than that of wandering from their post in search of food; or at the worst, of following the example set by their chiefs in flying from the foe: for fifty miles up the river, and all along the road by which the enemy retired, similar horrors presented themselves; and on some of the places of encampment, our soldiers could not find a place for their tents without first removing dead bodies to a distance.' On the twenty-first, our little army moved toward Melloone; a handful of men in the heart of an immense empire! pushing boldly on to its capital, nearly 300 miles distant, without a hope of farther reinforcement! On the twenty-sixth, a flag of truce was sent in, with notice that a commissioner, named Koleh Menghie, had arrived, with full powers to conclude a treaty of peace: this led to a discussion, but without effect; for the most glaring falsehoods were hazarded by this new envoy: our troops having been carried across the Irrawaddy under the protection of captain Chads, an attack was made on the boasted fortifications of Melloone; their defenders were driven in utter confusion from the place; and Memiaboo's treasure, to the amount of 40,000 rupees, with all his stud, fell into our hands.

On the twenty-fifth of January, 1826, the army again moved forward, and on the thirty-first was met by Dr. Price, an

American missionary, and assistant-surgeon Sandford, who had been made prisoners some months before ; both having given their parole of honor to return to the capital, whether successful or not in their mission : these gentlemen brought proposals for a short truce, which was readily granted ; and they retired in full hopes that they should be sent back to ratify terms of peace : these however proved fallacious ; as 40,000 men had still been collected, by high bounties, by grants of important privileges, and by earnest appeals to his people from a monarch tottering on his throne. This force, which was styled Gong-to-doo, or ' Retrievers of the king's glory,' was placed under the command of a savage warrior, called Nee-Woon-Breen, which has been variously translated, ' Prince of Darkness,' ' King of Hell,' and ' Prince of the Setting Sun.'¹³ On the eighth, when our army was within a day's march of Pagahm-mew, its doubts were wholly removed respecting the certainty of another contest ; and next day, as its columns, in number only about 2000, debouched from the forests into the open country, they discovered the Burmese drawn up in an inverted crescent. Undismayed by the strength or position of the enemy, our commander pushed boldly at their centre, which was soon overthrown ; no time was given them to rally in their works, whither they were closely pursued, and again routed with great slaughter : hundreds perished by jumping into the river ; the whole army was dispersed on the spot ; and the unfortunate Nee-Woon-Breen had no sooner reached the capital, than he was cruelly put to death by order of the king ; being trodden under foot by elephants taught to prolong the tortures of a criminal. The road to Ava now lay completely open : our troops continued to advance, and arrived within forty-five miles of the capital : there was no longer time for disguise, deceit, or treachery : on the evening of the twenty-fourth of February, therefore, Mr. Price, with two ministers of state, arrived at our camp near Yandaboo, to announce that the king and court would submit to terms : the treaty was then a second time settled, and finally signed ; the government engaging to furnish boats for the conveyance of a great part of our force to Rangoon : thus was the war brought to a close ; and a small band, composed of British warriors and their Indian fellow-subjects, stood as conquerors in the centre of the great Burmese empire ! Alexander's Persian conquest itself was hardly to be compared with this. A latent feeling however of disappointment pervaded our troops : though all felt proud in having

¹³ Snodgrass, p. 279.

compelled a stubborn foe to sign a peace glorious to themselves and their country, yet they were now within three marches of the despot's capital, the source whence the war and all its lengthened miseries had sprung; and it was hardly to be expected that the victorious soldier should turn his back on the 'golden city,' the riches of which he had expected to share, without a sensation of regret: nor was the aspect which the region itself here assumed less inviting; for the country from Pagahm-mew to Ava is most beautiful: 'extensive plains,' says major Snodgrass, 'of the finest land, watered by the Irrawaddy, are interspersed with evergreen woods, just large enough to give beauty and variety to the scenery; and the banks of the river are so thickly studded with villages, pagodas, temples, monasteries, and other handsome buildings, as to afford, under one *coup d'œil*, all the charms of a richly-varied landscape, with the more sterling beauties of a populous and fertile territory.' The acceptance of terms, however, on our part was politic: every sacrifice which the king and people were disposed to make, was intended to preserve the 'golden city' from violation: that once subdued, the court would probably have fled to some distant part of its extensive empire, leaving the conquerors in a position from which necessity would soon have compelled them to retire; with the probable sacrifice of all the objects for which we had been contending, and with the ruinous expenses of the war on our own shoulders. The following is an epitome of the articles of peace, concluded, on the one hand, by sir A. Campbell, T. C. Robertson, Esq., and captain Chads, R.N., British commissioners; and by Mengyee-Maha-men-hlah-kyanten Wongee, lord of Lay-Kaing, and Mengyee Maha-men-hlah-thu-hah-thoo-Atwen-woon, lord of the revenue, on the part of his Burmese majesty.

The four provinces of Arracan, and the provinces of Mergui, Tavoy, and Zea to be ceded in perpetuity to the honorable company; the Burmese government engaging to pay one crore of rupees by instalments: the provinces or kingdoms of Assam, Cachar, Zeatung, and Munnipore to be placed under princes named by the British government; residents, with an escort of fifty men, being appointed at each court: British ships to be admitted into Burmese ports, to land their cargoes free of duty, not to unship their rudders, or land their guns; Burmese ships having the same privileges in British ports: no person to be molested for their opinions or conduct during the war; and the Siamese nation to be included in the treaty. Dated June 3, 1826.

Each power commenced this war ignorant of the resources of its adversary ; but never was a monarch so deceived as his Burmese majesty, or one who required more convincing proofs of error and mistake : not satisfied with so many signal defeats, and undismayed by the steady advance of his foes into the heart of his empire, the king and his ministers stubbornly refused to yield, and to accept of what must be termed lenient conditions from a victorious army. But this singular obstinacy arose from their own nature and practice : a Burmese monarch has never been known to make war but for the sake of conquest ; and no instance is recorded of one of their race having relinquished a single acre which he could retain : judging from themselves, they concluded that such also was our policy ; and could not credit our offer of giving up so valuable a territory, on their acquiescence in the terms proposed : negotiations therefore had no effect until backed by severe punishment : and thus the sovereign permitted his country to be overwhelmed by a calamity, from the effects of which it may require half a century to recover, rather than listen to accommodation. The provinces ceded to Great Britain are likely to receive great advantages : the new settlement of Amherst-town, on the Saluan river, in the gulf of Martaban, particularly, is well situated as a mart for the Siamese, the Burmese, and even for the Chinese : the whole of these districts, now thinly peopled, will soon become populous ; for the inhabitants of Pegu, and even of Ava, already acquainted with the difference between their own arbitrary laws and our more liberal institutions, will fly from oppression to the ceded territory, where security of property and encouragement of industry will soon convert those ill-governed districts into the finest countries of the East. Nor is it likely that our Indian possessions will be again disturbed by the restless and vindictive court of Ava : the cession of Arracan amply secures that side of our empire from interference ; while the Burmese monarch cannot be ignorant, that, should he again offend, we can, by marching a force across the mountains, appear on the Irrawaddy in eight or ten days ; and before his capital in a month : the ‘ king of all the elephants,’ therefore, though he may intrigue and endeavor to deceive us, will not trouble our government with another war, till the memory of the last is worn out of the remembrance of himself and of his people.

Soon after the conclusion of this contest, our Indian government sent an embassy to Ava, at the head of which was Mr. J. Crawford, who finally settled several points relative to the

frontiers, and concluded a treaty of commerce very favorable to the company. The conduct of sir A. Campbell advanced his character for enterprise and prudence, as well as military talent and valor, to high and deserved renown: in the year 1831, he was created a baronet, and proceeded to New Brunswick as lieutenant-governor of that province: he was also presented with a splendid gold medal by the court of directors, to mark their sense of the distinguished skill and gallantry with which he conducted the Burmese campaign, and led his brave comrades in arms to victory.

We must not omit to observe, that throughout these events, the exertions of the Madras government, under its illustrious governor, were admirable. One-half of the army was sent abroad, either to Rangoon, Chittagong, or Calcutta; yet with the remaining forces sir Thomas Munro contrived to preserve in his province perfect order, which was never interrupted for a moment: to his suggestions also, many of the wisest measures adopted in this war were owing; while not a few, which might have led to disastrous results, were at his remonstrances abandoned: it is due, however, to lord Amherst to state, that he exhibited great firmness, as well as talent, under very trying circumstances; not the least of his excellences being a total absence of that vanity which too often prompts men in power to reject the wise counsels of their inferiors.

Contemporaneously with the brilliant exploits above mentioned, a very important service was rendered to our Indian empire by the gallant commander-in-chief, lord Combermere: the object of his interposition was to protect a native prince against an usurper; but on the good or ill success of that interposition, as it is well known, depended the peace of India, or the invasion of our power by a formidable league of native princes. The late rajah of Bhurtpoor had died in strict alliance with our government; and, by the terms of the treaty, each party was bound to assist the other against all enemies: apprehensive, however, of the consequences that might ensue after his death, the rajah, during his life-time, had announced his son, Bulwurt Singh, as his successor, and included him in the treaty of alliance: but when his decease took place, his nephew, Doorjun Sâl, having gained a party in the army, raised a successful revolt, obtained possession of Bhurtpoor, and seated himself on the musnud. The expelled prince then applied for aid to sir David Ochterlony, the company's resident at Delhi; and that officer embraced his cause; but his conduct in so doing was disavowed by lord Amherst, who

showed a strong disposition to proceed on the absurd principle of non-interference : farther information, however, induced him to change this intention ; and lord Combermere was sent with an army to expel the usurper.

Having taken the field with 25,000 European and native troops, his lordship directed his first attempt against Bhurtpoor itself, a fortress of immense strength, celebrated for its successful resistance to the force employed against it by lord Lake, in 1805, and considered by the natives as impregnable.

The fortifications of this place were such, that one might have supposed them to have been erected in those days of unlimited command over life and labor which produced the pyramids : the wall was of mud, sixty feet in thickness, and of great height, with a very wide and deep ditch : the citadel stood at the eastern extremity, occupying a situation that appeared higher than the town, defended by higher walls, and by a wet ditch of great width and depth : the circumference of the whole was about seven miles ; and the walls in all that extent were flanked with bastions at short intervals, on which were mounted an immense number of guns. Before this magnificent fortress our forces appeared on the tenth of December, 1825, with a *parc* of more than 100 pieces of artillery : during the night, the enemy had cut the embankment of a lake, for the purpose of filling the ditch ; a measure of precaution which had been found very serviceable in 1805 ; but our troops now arrived in time to repair the breach, before sufficient water had flowed into the fosse to render it impassable ; a few days were then spent in reconnoitring the works, and fixing on the best points of attack, until the whole battering train should arrive : desirous, however, of saving women and children from the effects of the terrible bombardment which he knew to be at hand, lord Combermere addressed a letter to Doorjun Sâl, requesting him to send out that inoffensive portion of the inhabitants, and promising them safe conduct : an evasive answer was at first returned, and the request was repeated : but in the true spirit of an Indian tyrant, the usurper ultimately refused his consent. On the twenty-third of December, therefore, everything being in readiness, the besiegers commenced their first parallel, under a very heavy fire, at the distance of about 800 yards from the north-east angle of the works : on the following morning, three batteries opened on the town, and continued, with several others afterwards erected, so vigorous a fire to the end of the month, that scarcely a roof was left uninjured : such, however, was the depth and tenacity

of the mud-walls, that cannon-shot had very little effect on them; so that on the third of January, 1826, miners were employed; but their first attempt failed, and a second was met by a counter-mine, when our men were driven away before they had advanced many feet; on the fourteenth also, a mine under one of the bastions, being lighted too hastily, failed of its effect, and occasioned some delay: his lordship, however, directed two others to be driven under the same bastion, which were fired on the sixteenth, and, with the aid of a day's cannonade, effected such a breach, that the result of the enterprise appeared no longer doubtful. Early in the morning of the eighteenth, the troops destined for the assault established themselves in the advanced trenches, unperceived by the enemy; and the explosion of a mine, loaded with 12,000 pounds of powder, under the north-east angle, was to be the signal of attack: at eight o'clock, this subterranean chamber of death was fired, and the effect was terrific: the ground trembled, as if agitated by an earthquake; and after it had heaved up with several convulsive throes, out burst the volcano: the whole of the salient angle, and a stone cavalier in its rear, were lifted into the air, which for some time was in total darkness: at length, the clouds of dust rolled away like billows in a storm; and the proud bastion, with 300 men, were seen precipitated below. Immediately, the two grand divisions of our army rushed up to the breaches, opposed by the besieged with all their implements of war, and their sabres flashing in the morning sun; but the foremost were soon laid low by British bayonets; and the rest giving way, were chased along the ramparts: whenever they came to a gun which they could move, they turned it against their pursuers, but were immediately bayoneted, and the gun was upset: in two hours, the whole rampart, though bravely defended, was in our possession; and early in the afternoon the citadel surrendered. Brigadier-general Sleigh, commanding the cavalry, made such a disposition of his troops, that he succeeded in capturing Doorjun Sâl, who, with his wife, two sons, and 160 chosen horsemen, attempted to escape. The garrison consisted of 36,000 troops, of all arms, near 10,000 of whom are said to have fallen during the siege: our loss was about 1200 men; many of whom were killed by the explosion of the great mine, from which the commander-in-chief himself had a narrow escape; two sepoys being destroyed by the descending masses within a few feet of his lordship.

The fortifications of Bhurtpoor were now demolished by

orders from government: the principal bastions were blown up on the sixth of February; and it was left for the rains to complete the ruin: all the other fortresses in the rajah's dominions surrendered; the rightful prince was reinstated in his authority; and the inhabitants returned to their abodes and to their allegiance. For this brilliant achievement, which preserved the tranquillity of our Indian empire, lord Combermere was raised to the rank of viscount, and afterwards made colonel of the first regiment of life guards: the governor-general, on account of the success of the Bhurtpoor siege and the Burmese war, was raised to the dignities of viscount Holmsdale, and earl Amherst of Arracan.

Little more remains to be said of lord Amherst's administration: in 1827, his lordship, attended by lady Amherst, made an extensive voyage of inspection up the Ganges, receiving homage and entertainments from tributary rajahs, princes, and kings: he returned to Calcutta early in the ensuing year, and on the eighth of March embarked for England. At the Cape of Good Hope, where he landed, he met his successor, lord William Bentinck, who carried with him to India the character of an enlightened statesman and energetic officer: the measures, however, which have been adopted under his government for unshackling the press, afford much matter for argument and speculation: whether a free press, though incompatible with an evil despotism, be compatible with a despotic government under its mildest and most equitable form, still remains to be proved: the experiment is in progress, and we may hope at least that it will be justified by success.

CHAPTER LXIV.

GEORGE IV. (CONTINUED.)—1825.

Meeting of parliament—Bill for the suppression of unlawful associations in Ireland—Catholic relief bill—Its failure in the house of lords—Speech of the duke of York, and his great popularity with the high-church party—Legal reforms—Increased salary of the judges—Unitarian marriage-act—Act against combinations among workmen—Free trade system—Corn laws—Financial statements—Close of session—Great commercial panic—Domestic events—Review of foreign relations—Opening of the session of 1826—Means adopted for the restoration of commercial confidence—Modification of the corn laws—Debates on restrictions of foreign manufactures—State of finances—Criminal code—State of the colonies—Scotch representation—Removal of attainders—Dissolution of parliament—Dissentions in the cabinet—Violence of parties at the general election—Meeting of the new parliament—Indemnity bill—Vigor of Mr. Canning's policy in Portugal—Capture of Missolonghi—Opening of the Menai bridge—Death of the duke of York—Duke of Wellington commander-in-chief—Catholic question—Illness of lord Liverpool—Dissolution of the cabinet—Appointment of Mr. Canning as premier.

THE sixth session of the existing parliament was opened by commission on the third of February, when the speech took a pleasing view of all our affairs, foreign and domestic, except those relating to Ireland, which have never yet given unalloyed satisfaction to any administration. The spirit developed in the proceedings of the catholic association could not fail to excite alarm in ministers; but as they were conscious that public opinion would not permit the enactment of a partial law against that body, while Orange societies were tolerated in all their violence, a bill was introduced by Mr. Goulburn, 'to amend the acts relating to unlawful associations in Ireland.' To resist this measure, opposition put forth all its strength; which produced an earnest debate, extended by adjournment through four nights: the chief interest imparted to it lay in Mr. Canning's eloquent vindication of himself against the insinuations of those who considered him estranged from the catholic

cause. After reviewing the various incidents of his public life, he observed;—‘I have thus shown, that in 1812 I refused office rather than enter into an administration pledged against the catholic question: I did this at a time when office would have been dearer to me than at any other period of my political career; when I would have given ten years of life for two of office; not on account of any sordid or selfish purpose of aggrandisement, but for other and higher views. Nor is this the only sacrifice I have made to the catholic cause: from the earliest dawn of my public life, aye, from the first visions of youthful ambition,—that ambition was directed to one object, before which all others vanished comparatively into insignificance: that object far beyond all the blandishments of power, beyond all the rewards and favors of the crown, was to represent in this house the university at which I was educated. I had a fair chance of accomplishing it, when the catholic question crossed my path: I was warned, fairly and kindly warned, that my adoption of that cause would blast my prospect: I adhered to the catholic cause, and forfeited all my long-cherished hopes and expectations; yet I am told that I have made no sacrifice! that I have postponed the cause of the catholics to views and interests of my own!’ Mr. Canning then, in a high tone of feeling and language, congratulated Mr. Peel, who had attained to that academical distinction which he himself had coveted so eagerly; little dreaming when he prayed that it might ‘long prove a source of reciprocal pride to their parent university, and her representative,’ how near the time was at hand, when even this champion of protestant ascendancy would be rejected by his Alma Mater as one of the most reprobate of her sons! Mr. Goulburn’s bill was finally carried by large majorities; but the catholic association, though it yielded to legal authority, and became defunct, was soon resuscitated under a different form: ostensibly regulating itself according to the late act, it disclaimed all religious exclusions, oaths, powers of acting in redress of grievances, and correspondence with dependent societies: thus evading the recent enactments, and concealing its intentions under the mask of charitable purposes, it pursued its original designs with impunity. So little was the question of emancipation considered to be involved in this concerning the association, that many of its warmest advocates voted in favor of the late act: indeed, after it had passed, the friends of emancipation determined to put forth still stronger efforts; accordingly sir Francis Burdett brought forward a plan, in which the principal bill for the

removal of civil disabilities was accompanied by two others, in derision termed 'its wings;' of these, one proposed to enact a state provision for the Roman catholic clergy, the other to raise the Irish franchise from forty shillings to ten pounds; the former being meant as a security to the state, the latter as a protection to Irish protestants against the overwhelming majority of catholics at elections: the principal bill passed the commons with majorities increasing in its several stages; but its ultimate fate was clearly foreseen before it reached the lords; for on the twenty-fifth of April, between the second and third readings in the lower house, the duke of York took occasion, in presenting a petition against it from the dean and chapter of Windsor, to utter his memorable speech, asserting—that the concession of the catholic claims was repugnant not only to the king's coronation oath, but to the principles of our constitution; and declaring that, 'to the last moment of his life, whatever might be his situation, he would oppose them, so help him God.' Such a declaration from the heir presumptive to the throne, was viewed by one party as a very unconstitutional proceeding; but by the other it was extolled, as the most manly, patriotic, and noble expression of sentiment that could be delivered at a critical moment: it was accordingly printed in letters of gold; was hung up in the houses of zealous protestants; and became the very watchword of the party: being supposed also to express the sentiments of the reigning sovereign,¹ it exercised a strong influence on the votes of those who were expectants of court favor; so that when the emancipation bill was brought up to the peers, it was thrown out by a majority of 178 to 130. The 'wings,' after this failure, were of course abandoned; and as popular feeling repudiated the principle on which they rested, Mr. O'Connell, who in the first instance had consented to force a state annuity on the Romish priesthood, and to disfranchise the forty shilling freeholders, made a public recantation of his errors, and 'asked pardon of God and his country.' The committee on the general condition of Ireland, which was re-appointed by the lords at the opening of the session, made its report; and the evidence produced of the misery existing in that misgoverned and unfortunate country, plainly showed that it could not long remain in such a state.

None of those great questions of constitutional law, which,

¹ This supposition was quite correct. On the 23rd of May, lord Eldon writes thus to his daughter—'I saw the king yesterday, who is much better, and not a little relieved in point of anxiety by the vote on the catholic question.'—*Life of Lord Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 554.

in times of distress, were represented as involving the very existence of the state, came under discussion this year: parliamentary reform, with its kindred topics, was also left unnoticed; while the legislature attended more to changes in the administration of justice, and of those laws which affect the civil relations between man and man: above all, improvement was sought in the court of chancery, a tribunal, superior to all others in the practical efficacy of its operations, in the comprehensive extent of its range, and in the enlarged principles on which it acts. The courts of common law may be called excellent within their own sphere; but if their doctrines and forms were not modified by equitable jurisdiction, they would in many instances cease to be instruments of justice: they look only at so much of a transaction as falls within their arbitrary definitions: though there may be circumstances, not comprehended in such definitions, which intirely alter its nature, yet a court of law cannot look at them; and it deals with the matter in hand, as if that little portion of it, which is included in a legal definition, embraced all particulars of the case: even where a court of law is by its principles permitted to view the whole of an action, it is often incapable, by reason of its forms, to do essential justice; as might be instanced in matters of accounts, the easiest of all subjects submitted to a court of equity, but which can hardly ever be settled in any other; and are generally referred to arbitration: on the contrary, nothing is too complex for the court of chancery, the duty of which is to deal with human transactions as it finds them; not substituting for realities narrow definitions, but examining all their details, and judging of them by the application of a system of principles built up through successive ages of talent and laborious improvement: besides, the court of chancery exercises functions very different from the mere determination of litigated rights, particularly in the guardianship of property, where, from the mode in which it is often limited in a refined state of society, partial interests come successively into existence throughout a long period, before there exists an absolute owner: from the vast variety, therefore, and complicated nature of the transactions with which this court deals, as well as from the enlarged principles on which it acts, it would be surprising if there were not parts in its machinery requiring improvement; and if any set of men, from pure motives, and with adequate knowledge of the subject, had devoted themselves to the task of ascertaining what alterations might be advantageously and prudently made in the forms and practice of equitable

jurisdiction, they would have merited the highest applause as public benefactors: the subject, however, unhappily fell into the hands of *Nisi prius* lawyers, who were not well acquainted with its details, and who from motives of political hostility seemed to make it an engine for assailing the character of the lord chancellor. In legal knowledge and sagacity, in patient investigation and impartial adjudication, probably no man superior to lord Eldon ever held the great seal of England; but the very nature of his mind,—particularly, that large and comprehensive perception of analogies, which he eminently possessed, led him into habits of hesitation, doubt, and indecision, which delayed proceedings in his court, until the miserable suitors were too often driven utterly to despair: also the life he had led from early youth, addicted solely to legal studies, and abstracted from the ameliorating influence of general society, caused him to adhere pertinaciously to existing institutions, and to oppose the introduction of innovation into any system with which he was connected: never did his prejudices relax so far as to suffer, without a shock, the approach of a correcting hand even to abuses which he had himself in his earlier days denounced: the bankrupt laws he had declared to be the disgrace of our country; ‘little more than a stock in trade for commissioners, assignees, and solicitors:’ the complicated procedure of his own court had also fallen under his severest reprehension; but he suffered these and all other abuses to flourish, without ever suggesting, or even tolerating, a remedy: those who praise him, very deservedly, for his many estimable qualities and virtues, his talents and industry, his wisdom and learning, would find it difficult to point out a triumph over abuses achieved by his great and splendid faculties. As his legal prejudices were even surpassed by those which fettered him on all questions of international policy or domestic administration; and as he was thought, in his distribution of professional honors and emoluments, to overlook those whose political opinions were obnoxious to him; he drew on himself attacks from disappointed men, whose irritated feelings led them to wound the judge through the court over which he presided: hence, it can be no matter of surprise that they were found ignorant in the very practices which they denounced, or unable to provide suitable remedies when invited to propose them. A commission of inquiry, which had been appointed last year, and had not yet made its report, produced no suspension of hostilities; but on the contrary, became in its turn a theme of severe abuse.

Two discussions on the subject took place this session; the first introduced by Mr. J. Williams, who, in presenting some petitions complaining of particular proceedings in chancery, delivered a long and sarcastic speech, in which he attacked the whole law of England; while that of real property, of which however he declared himself ignorant, was the object of his peculiar animadversion. On the seventh of June, sir Francis Burdett brought the subject again under discussion, by moving, that the evidence taken by the commission, instituted to investigate the practice of the court of chancery, be printed. Mr. Peel opposed the motion, because to print such evidence, without any accompanying report, was contrary to the practice of the house; and even if it were printed, the session was too far advanced for the introduction of any measure relating to it: during the discussion which ensued, sir M. W. Ridley seriously deprecated the attacks made night after night on the lord chancellor, who, he was persuaded, stood very high in the estimation of the British people: Mr. Brougham, however, did not profit by advice; but quitting that commendable spirit of moderation which he had for some time pursued, broke forth into a vehement attack on lord Gifford, deputy speaker of the house of lords, who had been distinguished by the patronage of the chancellor: the motion was rejected by a majority of 154 to 73: nevertheless it appears that an order moved by sir F. Burdett was placed on the journals of the commons, June the thirtieth; 'that there be laid before that house a list of all causes which have been heard by the lord chancellor during the last eighteen years, wherein judgment has not yet been given, specifying the time when heard; comprising all petitions in cases of bankruptcy already heard but not decided.' This order was passed without a word of observation; and occasioned so much annoyance to Lord Eldon that he was with some difficulty prevailed on to continue in office, lord Liverpool assuring him that the motion would drop with the session, and must be renewed to be of any force.²

The chancellor of the exchequer at this time brought forward a measure for augmenting the salaries of the judges; which, while it provided that fees should no longer form a part of their emoluments, prohibited the sale of those offices which the chiefs of the respective courts had been allowed so to dispose of: at first, it was proposed to grant the puisne judges £6000 a year; but the scheme ultimately adopted gave to the chief justices of the king's bench and common pleas

² Life of Lord Eldon, vol. ii. p. 564.

respectively £10,000 and £8000; to the chief baron of the court of exchequer £7000; and to each of the other judges £5500; while the retiring pensions of all were increased: the whole of this arrangement met with very illiberal opposition; for how few men bring so much talent, and give up so much time, to the public service! how few sacrifice so largely the profits of a lucrative profession, as the judges of our land! The unitarian marriage act, though supported by the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop of Lichfield, and lord Liverpool, being opposed by the lord chancellor, was again rejected; so also was lord Holland's motion for the second reading of a bill for altering the law of attainder and corruption of blood, both the principle and the imperfection of its details appearing objectionable to that high legal officer: a similar fate attended Mr. serjeant Onslow's bill for the repeal of our usury laws; though Mr. C. Wynne stated, that not only himself, but the chancellor of the exchequer, the president of the board of trade, and most of the cabinet ministers, were favorable to their abolition.

Many mischievous effects having arisen from the passing of an act proposed by Mr. Hume, which repealed both the statute and common law against combinations among workmen, Mr. Huskisson called attention to this subject, and detailed some painful reports regarding it, which had been forwarded to the home secretary: as a general principle, he admitted, that every man had an inherent right to carry his own labor to the best market, since labor was the poor man's capital; but, on the other hand, he as strenuously contended for the perfect freedom of those who gave employment to that labor; whose property, machinery, and capital ought equally to be protected: having shown the very injurious operation of the present system, he moved for a select committee, whose report soon led to a repeal of the act.

It had long been matter of doubt, whether the restraints which confined the trade of our colonies to the mother country, subject to regulations made solely with a view to the advantage of the latter, were not, in fact, injurious to both; and some steps in relaxation of the system had been already taken; but at this time, Mr. Huskisson undertook the responsibility of bringing the whole subject before the legislature, braving the clamors of those whose prejudices might remain unsubdued by the force of his statements, and the nature of his facts. The alterations which he proposed in our colonial system, were explained in a very elaborate speech on the twenty-third of

March ; when, by entering into historical details, he proved that all those articles of manufacture which had been most fostered, had most languished ; that excessive duties made the smuggler's fortune, while the manufacturer was disappointed, and the exchequer defrauded ; that the apprehension which guarded our fabrics with high duties was unfounded ; and that the true policy of the state, as well as the advantage of individuals, would be consulted, by reducing those duties sufficiently to countervail whatever might be imposed on raw material used in the different manufactories. Having first shown the very ungrateful return made to this country by the United States of America, which had been allowed to trade with our colonies in their own vessels, he proposed to open the colonial ports to all friendly powers, on the same principle, though with some modifications, as that on which they now traded with Jersey or Ireland : he was also anxious to encourage our own commerce, and that of our colonies, with the countries of South America, by extending to certain colonial ports the benefits and regulations of the warehousing or bonding system : another boon, intended for the colonies and their trade, was the abolition of large fees levied in almost all their ports, for the benefit of public officers : he also recommended two alterations of a local and specific nature ; one lowering the duty on sugar, imported from the Mauritius, to the same rate as that from the West Indies ; the other admitting, at all times, an importation of corn from Canada, on payment of a fixed and moderate duty. The resolutions embodying these propositions were unanimously adopted, with one trifling exception ; the bill, permitting importation of corn from Canada at a duty of five shillings being limited in its operation to a period of two years.

On the twenty-fifth, Mr. Huskisson brought forward the other parts of his scheme for promoting commerce, by a diminution of duties imposed with a view to protection rather than to revenue, and for affording relief to our shipping and navigation interests. He began by proposing a reduction of duties on the cotton and woollen trade, as well as those on manufactured linen, which in some cases rose as high as 180 per cent. ; but which he proposed to lower to ten, fifteen, and twenty-five per cent. respectively : he next adverted to foreign paper, books, and glass, which were almost prohibited by excessive duties ; also to metallic substances, particularly iron, copper, zinc, and lead : he then proceeded to consider how far it was possible to reduce certain imposts on raw materials, which

interfered with the success of our capitalists, who were obliged to use them in their manufactures; instancing the cases of articles employed in dyeing, as well as oil expressed both from olives and from rape seed: the duty on this latter he wished to take off altogether, and thus enable the manufacturer to supply the farmer with cake, instead of compelling him to procure it at a large cost in the foreign market: he also proposed to reduce the duty on all foreign wool, imported at a lower price than a shilling the pound, to one halfpenny. He concluded with some measures tending to relieve the commerce and navigation of this country: there was already a bill on the table to do away with quarantine duties, which the committee on foreign trade had equitably proposed to lay on the community at large: farther measures which he contemplated were, the abolition of all fees on commerce with our colonies; and the removal of duty payable on the transfer of any share in a ship, or of a whole ship, from one person to another. There was still another mode in which the shipping interest might be benefited; and that consisted in a reduction of stamps for bonds, required from exporters of certain goods to be delivered at certain places, from forty shillings to four shillings: he would also apply the same principle to custom-house debentures, or documents given by way of security, to those who were intitled to drawbacks: as conducive to the same end, he proposed an improvement in the lax system of our consular establishments; granting, instead of fees, a regular salary to their superintending officers. Though several members expressed an apprehension that such extensive changes in our commercial system might be injurious, Mr. Huskisson's propositions were generally commended by parliament, and by the country at large: the resolutions in which they became embodied were adopted without a dissentient voice; and were afterwards carried into execution by bills framed accordingly. Connected with these changes was the surrender of its charter by the Levant company, established in the reign of James I., and endowed with very considerable privileges.

In May, the secretary for foreign affairs laid on the table of the house of commons three important state papers: the first was a treaty of commerce with the independent states of the Rio de la Plata; the second was a treaty concluded with Russia by Mr. Stratford Canning, during his mission to St. Petersburg, in which that rising diplomatist had settled, in a satisfactory manner, disputed claims existing between the two countries, with regard to territories on the north-west coast of

America, as well as to certain rights of trade and navigation in the Pacific Ocean: the third was a treaty between Great Britain and Sweden, having for its object an abolition of the slave trade, as carried on by the subjects, or under the flag, of either nation. The effectual measure of visitation and detention—a measure proudly, meanly, and pertinaciously resisted by France—was with a frank and manly policy acceded to by Sweden; so that the cruisers of either power, under certain limitations, were permitted to stop, and bring in for adjudication, slave vessels trading under their respective flags: these limitations, indeed, restricted the exercise of the right to a small number of vessels on both sides, and in many other particulars guarded cautiously against the abuse of it: but as this right could not exist at all, in time of peace, except by virtue of a treaty, Mr. Canning, in obtaining the recognition of so important a principle, rendered great service to the cause of humanity.

The fluctuations of price in the corn market, and the distress attendant on them, since the period when the averages that were to regulate importation had been fixed, brought this complex question again before parliament: Mr. Huskisson declared himself favorable to a revision of the whole subject; he never had supposed that the former law could be permanent; for the policy of it must necessarily be viewed in relation to changes in the growth and price of corn abroad, as well as at home: it was also to be considered, that when we excluded grain, other nations would retaliate by excluding manufactures—a state of things, not to be desired by a country so essentially manufacturing and commercial as Great Britain: at the same time, in legislating on the admission of foreign corn, it was fit that the landed interest should not be overlooked: when it was said that our manufactures were no longer protected, and that corn therefore should be free, the argument was not applicable; because the latter was grown cheaper abroad, the former were produced cheaper at home, and therefore not subject, like the other, to be brought down by unrestrained importation. The motion for a committee on the corn laws, proposed by Mr. Whitmore, was not carried.

As our finances continued to improve, and the surplus exceeded by nearly £1,000,000 the estimate of the preceding year, taxes were lowered on various articles, directly and indirectly, to the amount of £1,500,000: the relief, with one exception,—a diminution of duties on ardent spirits,—was judiciously applied: the imposts reduced were on hemp,

coffee, wines, British spirits and rum, cider, and those articles in the assessed taxes which pressed particularly on the lower classes of society: after these arrangements, Mr. Robinson still calculated the gross revenue of the current year at £56,444,375, and the expenditure, including the interest of the debt, with the sinking fund, at rather more than £56,000,000: his speech on this occasion was eloquent, and his anticipations sanguine; and though some parties were dissatisfied, because there was not a greater diminution of direct taxation, others because greater relief was not given to West Indian interests, and some because the duties on tobacco were not lowered; yet altogether his financial statements and proposals were received with approbation, and his estimates for the year voted with little opposition: the session, therefore, was brought to a very harmonious conclusion; and on the sixth of July, parliament was prorogued by commission, under the appearance of extraordinary prosperity; but the illusion was soon to be dissipated, and all the golden prospects of the chancellor of the exchequer to vanish like a dream.

The causes of this sudden and unexpected reverse of fortune are now to be investigated. The vast abundance of capital, and consequent low rate of profit, during the last three years, had greatly promoted the increase of manufactures for exportation; and as country banks continued in full operation, this apparent prosperity of manufactures attracted to them much capital; whilst a system of credit was generated which caused a still farther extension: speculation at the same time added its impulse to this system; until, in the course of the present year, paper money, of various kinds, thrown into circulation, increased the quantity of currency beyond what the causes determining our supply of gold could sustain: the exchanges turned against us; the currency became depreciated; and gold began to flow out of the country. The Bank of England, finding that the demand for gold diminished its stock of coin, contracted its issue of notes; and in this way, if the state of trade had been good, the currency might have been reduced sufficiently to restore the exchanges to par, leaving us with our natural quantity: but the reduction in quantity took place first among those who had pushed their credit to the utmost: these parties were consequently rendered incapable of meeting their engagements, and became bankrupts: speculation, or over-trading, being very general, the failure of some alarmed others; those who had given credit pressed their debtors for payment; goods were sacrificed to

make it ; prices came down, alarm increased, and ruin seemed impending over all. At this time the three per cent. consols fell from eighty-two to seventy-five ; and, so difficult was it to get money which would be received, that interest was given, in some instances, for temporary loans, at a rate equal to fifty per cent. per annum : country bank notes were extensively driven from circulation ; and the directors of the bank, being in better credit, put out a large additional amount ; yet they were nearly drained of coin ; and, if their stock had been quite exhausted, a new restriction must have taken place, or the whole mass of Bank of England notes would have been, as it were, annihilated : in that case, as coin could not have been procured immediately, we should have been reduced to a state of barter. On the authority of Mr. Huskisson, it is stated, that a run on the bank for another forty-eight hours would have actually brought us to that alarming condition.

These evil effects arose out of the system, which allowed companies, or individuals, to create paper money to any extent, and push it into circulation ; the only check being their liability to pay their paper in gold ; a check, which the events of this period showed to be no adequate security against an almost annihilation of the common instrument of exchange. Neither the amount of taxes, nor the high rate of rent, nor low rate of profit, had any necessary connection with this extraordinary derangement of commercial affairs ; but it resulted from speculation, aided by a vicious system of making paper money, which improperly increased the quantity of currency, drove gold out of the country, and then caused a general demand for it in exchange for paper, which demand could not be met : the consequence was, an almost general breaking up of those who depended on this paper, and an approach to the annihilation of paper money.

Joint-stock stock companies, in whose schemes a sum of more than £17,500,000 had been subscribed, and which, in the plenitude of their imaginary power, would have contracted to throw a bridge across the channel, or make a tunnel to the antipodes, came for the most part into the gazette, without a solvent subscriber, or an available shilling ; and, toward the end of the year, several London banks stopped payment : the agitation in the city became extreme ; and, at length, a general alarm, or, as it was termed, a panic ensued : all hastened to draw their money from the bankers, thus forwarding the very catastrophe which they dreaded ; and more than seventy country banks either totally failed, or were compelled

to suspend their payments, before the consternation had subsided: this violent stoppage of all ordinary channels of credit, and the consequent cessation of business, exercised a strong reaction on the trading and manufacturing interests; so that the year 1825 closed in more alarming convulsions of the mercantile world than this nation had ever witnessed. Both the government and the bank came with laudable promptitude to the relief of the public: an extraordinary coinage of gold was expedited; a new issue of one and two pound notes was poured into the country to supply the deficiency of circulation caused by provincial failures; and commercial meetings were encouraged to pass resolutions for the support of national credit; by which means the progress of alarm was checked, and public confidence in some degree restored.

In March this year, Mr. Brunel commenced his extraordinary undertaking to construct a tunnel under the Thames at Rotherhithe, a work which more than all others, executed in this country, attracts the attention of foreigners; and on the fifteenth of June the first stone of the new London Bridge was laid by John Garratt, esq., lord mayor, in the presence of the duke of York, attended by Mr. John Rennie, its eminent architect. The failures of so many companies put a short stop to the general scheme for improvements in London, though several were projected: last year, the plan of Macadamising the principal streets and squares commenced; but it was now found, that where there was a heavy and constant draught, such a system was not practicable. This year, a second grand festival was held in York cathedral, when the receipts amounted to the immense sum of £20,200, and the expenditure to £11,000:³ but of the surplus, £6000 was destined for the erection of a grand concert room, and the remainder was distributed among the city and county hospitals. One of the most extraordinary instances of accumulation ever known was made public in the accounts of the Equitable Life Assurance Company; for its vested capital, in the month of June, was as follows:—

Three per cents.	.	.	.	.	£9,650,000
Three and a half ditto	.	.	.	.	430,000
On mortgage	.	.	.	.	952,000
					<hr/>
					£11,032,000

³ At the first meeting of this kind the sum collected was £16,174, the expenditure was £8809, and £7200 was given to the charities.

Of this immense property, no less than £8,718,108 had accumulated in the period between December, 1804, and June, 1825. On the sixteenth of August, the first steam-vessel to India, the *Enterprise*, captain Johnston, R.N., left Falmouth, reaching the Cape on the thirteenth of October, and arriving at Bengal on the ninth of December: also a new expedition started on a scheme of discovery in Africa, under captain Clapperton. Its enterprising leader died at Soccatoo in April, 1827; but his papers were preserved by his faithful attendant, Richard Lander; who, with his brother, had afterwards the glory of solving the long doubtful problem respecting the course of the Niger.

In March, a grand entertainment was given to the duke of Wellington by noblemen and gentlemen connected with the commerce of our metropolis, for the purpose of presenting his grace with a magnificent vase, of the value of 1100 guineas, in testimony of his transcendent services; 'not (as the inscription remarked) in the presumptuous hope of extending the glory of a name which is imperishable, but to testify their admiration of the last and greatest of his achievements, the battle of Waterloo.' The duke, in returning thanks for this noble present, without undervaluing the conduct of himself, his officers, and gallant men, attributed the great success of that battle, and of the war, chiefly to the indomitable spirit of the country: with regard to the great victory which was so splendidly noticed, he very justly characterised it as one, 'that had produced consequences unheard of as the result of any event in ancient or modern times; relieving mankind from every apprehension of a return to that horrible, revolting, and degrading tyranny, which had been imposed on almost all the world, but which the people of this country had happily escaped.'

Among the events which took place this year on the continent, that which seemed pregnant with the most important consequences was the death of that amiable man and excellent sovereign, the emperor Alexander; for it appeared capable not only of putting in jeopardy the tranquillity of his empire, but of changing the whole course of its foreign policy: the event, however, was not felt beyond the limits of Russia. The grand duke Constantine, a brutal man, who had renounced his right of inheritance on occasion of his marriage with a Polish lady, adhered to his pledge; and though a conspiracy exploded at St. Petersburg, under pretence of forcing the crown upon him, it was defeated by the grand duke Nicholas, who

succeeded to the throne, professing a determination to pursue steadily that course of policy which had been adopted by his predecessor. France was occupied in the coronation of its bigoted and infatuated monarch, who soon proved the truth of Napoleon's expression concerning him and his race, 'that they had learned nothing, and had forgotten nothing, in their adversity.' His coronation at Rheims, on the twenty-ninth of May, exhibited a degree of grandeur and parade rivalling that of Napoleon at Paris: but what a difference in the attendants on those memorable scenes! In one instance the sun shone upon the eagles of the empire; upon glittering cuirasses and polished helmets, the bright array of those bold men who aimed at establishing French dominion over the prostrate nations of the world: in the other were seen the banners of the church; and gold-embroidered robes covering the bended forms of saint-like figures, who meditated in their secret hearts the establishment of a spiritual tyranny over France itself, in comparison with which that of Robespierre himself might have been accounted a blessing! The British envoys sent to this gorgeous ceremony were the duke of Northumberland, lord Granville, and sir George Naylor, who invested, though he could not ennoble, Charles X. with the order of the garter.

Sweden, Denmark, and Germany remained without much alteration of circumstances, except that some members of the holy alliance, who had nearly renounced all intercourse with Wirtemberg, as not being sufficiently friendly to their principles, renewed their diplomatic relations with that power: Russia and Austria again sent ambassadors to Stutgard, professing to have forgiven the king's lapse of judgment in favoring the principles of constitutional government. Unhappy Spain was not only dishonored by the presence of foreign troops, but distracted by all the miseries of factions, revolts, and changes of administration; nor were there many of its cities, whose prisons were not filled with persons implicated in, or suspected of rebellion: at this period, however, the king seemed, by comparison, to have assumed a new character, and to appear as a protector of the liberal party: the prisoners, on the present occasion, were ultra-royalists, monks, and priests, who, thirsting for the blood of constitutionalists, gave out that 'the beloved Ferdinand' himself was a freemason; and that the object of all good Spaniards should be to place on the throne the infant Don Carlos, whose excellent principles and sincere catholicism were well known. In Portugal, principally through the influence of the British and French ambassadors,

the king was induced to recognise the independence of Brazil; the sovereignty of which he ceded to his eldest son, Don Pedro: after this preliminary step, the proffered mediation of Great Britain between the two states was accepted; and sir Charles Stuart visited Rio Janeiro to negotiate a treaty between the mother country and the new transatlantic empire: the interior state, however, of Brazil was much disturbed by the tyrannical and imprudent conduct of its new emperor; and war also commenced between Brazil and the republic of Buenos Ayres. In Italy all was tranquil, and the Austrian government proceeded in its usual routine; kind and paternal as long as its subjects yielded implicit obedience to its dictates, and totally discarded politics from their imagination. With regard to the papal states, the administration of Leo XII. was distinguished by a superior degree of bigotry; and in Naples, the old king, who died on the fourth of January, was succeeded by his present majesty; when many persons, who had been exiled on account of their share in the Neapolitan revolution, received permission to return. The relations between Turkey and Russia still continued in a very ambiguous and critical state; though no steps were taken toward hostilities on either side. During the winter, the Greeks had been more occupied by internal dissensions than by efforts to meet their barbarous foes; who, on the contrary, had made all possible preparations for a vigorous campaign: the most important feature in this was the Egyptian expedition under Ibrahim Pasha, step-son to Mahomet Ali, pasha of Egypt; who, having landed in the Morea, with a formidable force, trained by European discipline, soon reduced the city of Navarino: in western Greece, the Turks invested Missolonghi, where lord Byron, the zealous and disinterested advocate of the Greek cause, died last year. In the United States, Mr. John Quincy Adams was chosen president, against three competitors, by the legislative body, on whom the election devolved; no candidate having had the requisite majority of suffrages among the electors deputed by the States. In South America, the various republics were proceeding to consolidate their power; though Chili was much disturbed, and Paraguay had fallen under the despotic tyranny of Dr. Francia.

The commercial affairs of Great Britain were still in a very unsettled state, when parliament assembled in the beginning of February; and the first attention of both houses was naturally directed to existing difficulties, though the greater part of them could receive no remedy but through the lenient hand of

time: the hazard of their recurrence, however, might be lessened; accordingly, the house of commons, in pursuance of a recommendation in the speech, to protect public and private interests against sudden fluctuations by placing the currency on a firm foundation, resolved itself into a committee on the bank charter; when a proposition for prohibiting the issue of notes below the value of £5, and withdrawing those in circulation after a period of three years, was brought forward by the chancellor of the exchequer; and being supported by Mr. Brougham, though opposed by Mr. Baring, was carried by a majority of 232 to 89. This resolution to extinguish small notes in England (for the measure did not extend to Scotland) was followed by two other bills affecting our currency: the first of these, in opposition to what was thought an unjust monopoly of the Bank of England, permitted the number of partners in each country bank to be unlimited;⁴ the second, as a compensation to the bank for such a concession, extended its exclusive privileges to a circle round the metropolis, with a radius of sixty-five miles; and authorised the directors to establish branch banks in different parts of the country. While these measures were in progress, the public distress appeared but little diminished, and there seemed to be a general expectation that government would alleviate it by an issue of exchequer bills: ministers, however, had the firmness and prudence to abstain from any short-sighted and injurious palliatives; though they guaranteed the bank to an extent of two millions for the purchase of exchequer bills in the money market: the bank itself came to a resolution of lending three millions on direct or collateral security; but the whole of this was not applied for; and the very knowledge that such loans were attainable, had a considerable effect in restoring confidence among the commercial classes. What indeed can destroy the elasticity of a country which possesses such resources as Great Britain, while she is true to herself? Commerce, feeling itself unshackled, soon repaired its losses, discovering new powers, and new provinces; forcing its way not only through European nations, where the ingratitude of those who had recovered their thrones by our assistance repaid us by raising barriers against our trade; but penetrating the most barbarous regions of the earth, while it laid open the mysterious Niger and the distant Irrawaddy to our ships: China lay in the background: yet even she was destined to succumb hereafter to the irresistible spirit of commerce.

⁴ Previous to this time, it could not exceed six.

The corn laws were again agitated, and a committee was moved for by Mr. Whitmore, to take them into consideration. Mr. Huskisson, on being referred to more particularly, as having in the preceding session pledged himself to a revision of these enactments, maintained that the pledge was qualified; that the present was not a fit time for such an undertaking, though he had every reason to suppose that during next year this subject might with propriety be brought before the house; in which case, he was most anxious to give it a serious and dispassionate consideration: but though the arrangement of our corn laws thus remained unsettled, it was found necessary, before the end of the session, to introduce two bills for modifying their strict operation. There was at present but little diminution of public distress; and its continued pressure led to a series of disgraceful riots in Lancashire, where the vengeance of the mob was furiously directed against machinery, especially power looms, under a notion that these were the great cause of their want of employment. The people acted from ignorance; but this ignorance had been stimulated by a state of suffering approaching almost to starvation, which no local subscriptions could relieve: as therefore, in the ports of Hull, Liverpool, and some others, there were about three thousand quarters of bonded wheat, it was supposed that the liberation of this might diminish the extent of suffering, while it would have no material effect on the agricultural interests: Mr. Canning therefore brought forward a proposition to allow bonded corn to come into the market. Again, as it was impossible to foretell the result of the ensuing harvest, (and from the general aspect of the crops fears were entertained on this point,) it was also proposed, as a measure of precaution, to vest in government, during the recess, a power of permitting foreign grain to be imported, on payment of a fixed duty. Both measures were carried, after a strong opposition: but in the second case, the quantity of corn admissible, instead of being indefinite, was limited to 500,000 quarters; and the period to two months from the opening of the ports.

In 1824, the legislature had begun to act on the principles of free trade, by taking off those restrictions which intirely prohibited the importation of foreign silks; and to the bill which permitted their admission with an *ad valorem* duty of thirty per cent., and which was now about to come into operation, a large portion both of masters and workmen referred the present depression of the trade, rather than to causes which did not come so readily within general comprehension: many

manufacturers also limited their orders until the effect of this untried system should be somewhat known ; while more joined in the outcry raised against it : the truth is, little opposition was made to the measure when it passed ; and if other circumstances, which that measure in no way effected, had not created distress, it never would have been decried : a great decay, however, of the trade having taken place, nothing was easier than to ascribe it to the impossibility of our meeting foreign competitors in the market, loaded as we were with taxation and burdens of various kinds : accordingly, numerous petitions were presented from the districts in which silk manufactures were carried on, praying for a repeal, or at least for a modification, of the enactment of 1824. On the twenty-third of February, Mr. Ellice, one of the members for Coventry, moved that these petitions should be referred to a select committee ; and the motion led to a debate, which, by adjournment, continued two evenings : on this occasion, Mr. Huskisson was driven to vindicate the leading part he had taken in the measure referred to ; a task, which he executed with eminent ability and success, being ably seconded by Mr. Canning : who, in a speech, interesting not only for its talent, but for the just and generous praise bestowed on his friend, gave utterance to the feelings of vexation and disgust which he and Mr. Huskisson had to endure from the enemies of reason and philosophy ; ‘ a sect, small in numbers, and powerless in might ; who thought that all advances toward improvement were retrogradations toward jacobinism : these persons,’ he said, ‘ seem to imagine, that under no possible circumstances can an honest man endeavor to keep his country on a line with the progress of political knowledge, and to adapt its course to the varying circumstances of the world : such an attempt is branded as an indication of mischievous intentions, as evidence of a design to sap the very foundations of the country’s greatness.’ The following passage, however, deserves particular observation, as tending to unmask a set of hypocritical patriots, who strive to maintain their selfish views and miserable prejudices under the shelter of a great name, while they either egregiously misrepresent or completely misunderstand the character of him who bore it. ‘ It is singular,’ said Mr. Canning, ‘ to remark, how ready some people are to admire in a great man the exception, rather than the rule of his conduct : such perverseness is like the idolatry of barbarous nations, who can see the noonday splendor of the sun without emotion ; but when he is eclipsed, come forward with hymns and cymbals to adore him : thus,

there are those who venerate Mr. Pitt less in the brightness of his meridian glory, than under his partial obscurations; who gaze on him with the fondest admiration when he has ceased to shine.' Pitt, indeed, was a true philosopher, and no stubborn follower of antiquated precedents. Who can imagine, that, if he had lived, experience would not have corrected many of his views; while the improved state of the world opened his eyes to glorious visions of the future? Mr. Canning, in one of his later speeches, declared that, in applying philosophy to politics, he only carried into effect Pitt's own declarations.

Soon afterwards, Mr. Huskisson was obliged to enter on a defence of the late policy pursued respecting the shipping interest and navigation laws: on which occasion, nothing could be more clear or comprehensive than his exposition of the principles on which the former system was founded, of the changes which had since occurred, and of the consequent necessity of our conformity to those altered circumstances: the whole of our colonial and foreign commerce passed under his review, from the first enactment of the navigation law (12 Charles II.), to the present period: he proved the necessity, as well as policy, of the various innovations which had from time to time been made on its principle, more especially since the close of the first American war; and to support his statement, he concluded by moving for a variety of returns relative to shipping, tonnage, and men, employed in the merchant service, from the year 1814 to 1825 inclusive.

On the eighteenth of April, a petition presented to the house of commons from a person confined for a contempt of the court of chancery, was made an opportunity for attacking that court and its head. Mr. Hume declared that the greatest curse which ever fell on any nation was to have such a court, and a judge who perpetuated such a system: and similar language was held on the twenty-first, when the petition of another complainant was presented. In the mean time the chancery commissioners had produced their report, and sir John Copley, then attorney-general, addressed his mind so promptly to the subject, that by the eighteenth of May he had digested a plan, which he opened to the house of commons in a lucid speech, introductory to a bill for regulating the practice of the court: but owing to the lateness of the season, and some other considerations which impeded its progress, this measure was deferred to the following session. Meanwhile ministers set themselves earnestly to work in promoting the objects of the commission, and provided pecuniary means for

carrying them into effect, from what is called the suitors' fund.

All this meditated disarrangement of his court and system, as well as his favorable inclination toward lord Gifford, would have induced lord Eldon to resign his office, had not the death of that amiable and excellent person, whom he contemplated as his probable successor, intervened in the beginning of September.

Though the financial statement of the chancellor of the exchequer partook of that favorable character which it had sustained for the last three years, he admitted that it would be unsafe to frame his estimates without allowing for some loss in various branches of revenue, consequent on the present state of public embarrassment; but, after all deductions, he could not reckon the probable produce of the year before him at less than £57,000,000, while he calculated the whole expenditure at 56,328,421. In his speech on this occasion, he enumerated the various taxes reduced since 1816, which amounted to the enormous sum of £27,522,000; yet this, far from diminishing the various sources of revenue, had rather infused into them new energy, and justified his most sanguine expectations: such a declaration, which held out much happier prospects than could have been anticipated, was received by the house with general satisfaction; and the necessary supplies for the year were voted, though not without considerable opposition from Mr. Hume, Mr. Maberly, and some other members, regarding both the management of the national debt, and the amount of the army, navy, and civil estimates.

Mr. Peel, at this period, applied the powers of his clear and dispassionate mind to the simplification and improvement of our criminal code; purifying it of many barbarous enactments and absurd technicalities, introduced when society differed widely from its present state. An important bill, for amending the law of felony, as well as the administration of criminal justice, was now carried; but another for consolidating and amending the laws relative to larceny, and giving to judges a power of awarding costs to prosecutors in cases of misdemeanor, was, on account of the multiplicity of its details, left for consideration to another session: one clause, which Mr. Lamb endeavored to introduce into the bill, was contested by great names and with much ability on both sides; this was a proposal, which had been already more than once rejected, for allowing counsel to prisoners: the attorney-general, while he admitted that the opinion of the bar, respecting its merits, was

divided, felt convinced that its effects would be injurious to the prisoner as well as to justice; for instead of a simple statement and calm examination of facts, we should have all the zeal and struggle for victory, which were usually seen in civil cases: besides, counsel for the prosecution would always have the benefit of reply whenever a witness was called for the accused person; which might more than counterbalance any favorable effect of evidence: again, if the address of the prisoner's counsel promised to be efficient, the judge would in many cases be compelled to animadvert on it; in doing which he might unconsciously pass the exact boundary that ought to circumscribe his remarks: then the impression would probably go forth, that the verdict of the jury had been elicited by those remarks; and the judge, instead of being, as now, counsel for the prisoner, would be almost compelled to become an advocate against him. On the other side, the absurdity of permitting counsel to start and multiply frivolous and visionary objections to the form and phraseology of an indictment, while they were prohibited from intermeddling with the merits and evidence of their client's case, was placed in a strong light by Mr. H. Twiss: he also displayed the hardship under which a prisoner lay, who, wishing to address the jury on the facts of a case, must do it with his own lips, under all the disadvantages of natural disability, physical impediments, or accidents of his situation; while the very incompetency to do himself justice would be aggravated by a knowledge of the serious consequences attendant on his failure. 'As to the fiction of the judge being his counsel,' said Mr. Twiss, 'it would in most cases be found that he was counsel against the prisoner, and for the prosecutor. Whence came the only instructions which the judge received in any of these cases? from the deposition of witnesses for the prosecution: and sir Robert Atkyns, in his notes on lord Russell's trial, had said,—'I well know by experience what sort of counsel judges usually be for a prisoner.' Usually, indeed, the jury understand the judge's charge as having a tendency to protect the prisoner from wrong; but in that respect, he becomes counsel for the prosecution: barely fair play is not enough for a man, who has for his antagonist a skilful and practised advocate.' Mr. Peel admitted that the arguments and opinions on this point were nearly balanced; but since his own experience, and the knowledge acquired from his official situation, led him to think that justice was most satisfactorily administered under the present system, he felt unwilling to risk any change. In the early part of this session, the house was occupied by a

case which Mr. Denman had brought before it in the preceding year, relating to an act of great oppression exhibited by Mr. Kenrick, one of the Welsh judges, and a magistrate of Surrey : evidence on the charge was entered into ; and Mr. Denman moved, that, as Mr. Kenrick had shown himself an unfit person to exercise the judicial functions, an address be presented to his majesty, praying him to remove that gentleman from the office of judge of the great session of Wales. The manner in which this question was treated by the ministerial part of the house, and in which it was negatived without a division, was no bad argument, in the mind of many unprejudiced persons, *in favor of parliamentary reform.*

In the course of this session, cases of great cruelty and injustice, exercised by owners, magistrates, and judicial courts, against the slaves in our colonies, were brought before parliament, and eloquently exposed by Mr. Denman, Mr. Brougham, lord Suffield, and others. Instead of the less dilatory methods proposed by these gentlemen for the extinction of slavery, delay and remedial measures were suggested by lord Liverpool and Mr. Canning ; the latter of whom declared, that if immediate and hasty steps were taken, our West Indian possessions would be abandoned to a state of savage desolation, of which wild speculators had not the slightest notion : at the same time, he was obliged to confess, that in most of our colonies, the exhortations sent by government for ameliorating the condition of their slaves, had been treated with intolerable neglect and contempt : the previous question, moved by sir T. Acland, was carried by a large majority ; and thus the colonial legislatures were still allowed to show how far they were ready, by timely concessions and purposes of good faith, to avert a direct interference of the mother country in their internal regulations. The session did not pass off without some attempts at a reform of the house of commons made by lord John Russell, in a bill to prevent bribery at elections ; by Mr. Abercromby, who wished to amend the representation of Edinburgh ; and by sir J. Newport, to disfranchise non-resident freemen in Ireland. Mr. Abercromby's motion was strongly opposed by Mr. Dundas and sir G. Clerk, sitting members for the town and county of Edinburgh ; as well as by Mr. Canning, who considered it as intended to undermine those barriers which resisted the inroads of a more wide and sweeping innovation : nor was the unexampled prosperity of Edinburgh, and the contentment which pervaded its population, forgotten to be brought forward, as a convincing proof of the excellence of the old

system. Mr. Canning, after expatiating on advantages connected with the Scotch representation, observed, that his objection to the present motion was its application, as a single instance of reform in a borough, to the general question: it was not usual, he said, to make an attack on a single borough by an allegation of prevailing abuses; but it was quite new to institute a charge against it because its elective franchise was not proportionate to its actual population: this principle, if once admitted, would let in the general question of reform, and lead to endless squabbles: he concluded, however, with an extraordinary expression of his hopes, that the motion would be repeated annually for the innocent gratification of the noble lord (J. Russell) and those who advocated it; little thinking how near that gratification was, and how ample, if not innocent, it would be!

Before parliament broke up, measures were taken for the restoration of five Scotch peerages forfeited by rebellion in the last century: the only person who expressed disapprobation regarding these acts of grace was lord Milton; and he avowed, that his opposition was founded not on personal grounds, but on political considerations alone: why should not a bill be brought in for the restoration of titles against all acts of attainder passed under the present and preceding dynasties? why make a selection of forfeitures incurred for treason, not against the crown, but against the liberties of the subject? He lamented that he had not stated his objections when these bills first made their appearance in the house.

This sixth and short session was prorogued by commission on the thirty-first of May; and on the second of June parliament was dissolved. Parties in it had chiefly followed the divisions of the cabinet: the principal of these, under the influence of the lord chancellor, supported every abuse from a dread of change; the minority, at the head of which was Mr. Canning, declared itself favorable to all practicable improvements; while the premier held a middle course between them, agreeing with the first in little else except his repugnance to catholic emancipation, but tempering the ardor of the other by his habitual caution; commanding, however, the respect of both, by his character for moderation and integrity. Each party was held in check by the parliamentary strength of its opponents: the whigs, hopeless of place, were reduced to a necessity of forwarding their principles through the acts of one portion of the cabinet, while the tories naturally supported the other; so that the marks of ancient opposition became almost

obliterated, and the only violence exhibited was in the conduct of a small party of radicals; but the people themselves, forgetting in a great degree political differences, contributed to render this era memorable in our annals. Under such circumstances, the dissolution of parliament did not portend many political changes: the elections were carried on with less animosity than usual; the chief topics on which candidates were tested, being the corn laws and the catholic question. In England, the duke of York's speech, and the violence exhibited in Ireland, had created a strong feeling against the Roman catholics; but in the latter country, their association had re-appeared under a different form; and, being aided by efforts of the priests, who identified themselves with the lay agitators, it procured the return of a large majority, pledged to support the claims of their papistical constituents. The hostile feelings of the two parties were terribly excited by this conflict: the peasantry, under the spiritual influence of their pastors, generally voted for candidates favorable to emancipation, against their own landlords; many of whom, in return, exercising their right of ejectment, spread misery and indignation far and wide throughout the country: the result of a strongly contested election dispossessed the Beresford family of a seat for the county of Waterford; and this circumstance diffused a joy over Ireland, which almost consoled the sufferers for all their calamities.

The meeting of parliament, which took place on the fourteenth of November, was hastened by the necessity of obtaining its sanction for a measure, which the state of the harvest had forced on government: toward the end of August, an evident deficiency in the crops caused the prices of grain to rise above the importation limit; but the averages could not be taken, or foreign corn legally brought to market, before the fifteenth of November: ministers, therefore, in this emergency, admitted it on their own responsibility, by an order of council, on the first of September: hence the necessity of a bill of indemnity; which was passed without opposition: about the same time, ministers announced their intention of revising the corn laws, but not before the Christmas recess. The only other measure of importance which occupied attention before that period was one which eminently signalised Mr. Canning's policy; and exhibited signs of that promptitude and vigor, both in counsel and execution, which once distinguished the immortal Chatham. The state of Portugal, including an attempt made by the execrable Miguel against his father's liberty, if not against his

life, and the acknowledgement of Brazilian independence by John VI., under the advice and influence of Great Britain, has been already detailed: during all this time, the French minister at Lisbon, supported by the queen and her faction, labored incessantly to deprive England of its ancient ascendancy in the Portuguese councils; attempting even to occupy the country with French troops drawn from Spain: but he was foiled by the vigor of our government, and the presence of our ships in the Tagus. In the spring of the present year, John VI. died, having appointed his daughter, the infant Isabella Maria, regent, in the name of his eldest son Don Pedro: he however being, by the Brazilian constitution, obliged to make his election between the two crowns, abdicated that of Portugal in favor of his eldest daughter; but, wishing to prevent a disputed succession, and encouraging the incestuous example which had so long disgraced his family, he directed that she should espouse, and share the throne with her uncle Don Miguel: at the same time, to secure the attachment of the liberal party in Portugal, while he conciliated the opposing faction, he re-modelled the ancient institutions of that country into a constitutional or representative form of government; and of this instrument, the British envoy, sir Charles Stuart, was induced to become the bearer, on his return from the Brazilian court. This proceeding indeed of our ambassador was publicly characterised by Mr. Canning as an unauthorised interference; but it was difficult to persuade the world that the new constitution was not framed and promulgated in concert with our government: in Portugal, it was received by the liberals with great joy; but by the absolute party with a virulent hostility, which prompted them to conspire for its overthrow, in order that their favorite, Don Miguel, might ascend the throne: in this design they were openly encouraged by the queen dowager, and covertly by France, that secret promoter of plots and intrigues in all countries where her ambassadors, her consuls, her military or civil officers, her merchants or private citizens reside: hence several Portuguese regiments were persuaded to desert into Spain, where they proclaimed Miguel, and swore allegiance to him as king of Portugal: nor was this proceeding viewed with any displeasure by the Spanish monarch, who was very unwilling to see liberal institutions established in the vicinity of his realm: the rebels, therefore, were not only sheltered within his territories, but supplied and equipped by his means for the invasion of their own country; and though, in answer to remonstrances made by the Portuguese regency and the British

government on this point, he disavowed and condemned the acts of his officers on the frontier; yet the local authorities so systematically persevered in the same course as to leave no doubt that they acted by instructions from the court of Madrid. With such assistance, the 'absolute party' became so formidable, that the existing government, as well as the constitutional cause, was in imminent danger; and M. de Palmella, Portuguese ambassador in London, applied to our government for military aid, on the faith of ancient treaties: accordingly, on the eleventh of December, ministers brought down a message from the king, recounting the hostile and faithless conduct of Spain, and requesting that parliament would enable his majesty to fulfil his obligations toward the oldest of his allies. The proposal for an address to the throne on this occasion produced from Mr. Canning a speech, which may be classed among the finest efforts of that distinguished orator: in it he not only vindicated our interference in affairs of the peninsula, but fully developed the principles of his foreign policy: disclaiming every purpose of interfering in the internal dissensions of Portugal, or influencing the settlement of her domestic institutions, he considered England as merely called on to defend her from invasion organised by foreign aid: after going over the provisions of subsisting treaties to prove this position, he called attention to the present relative state of Portugal and Spain; declaring, that the vote he asked was for the defence of one country, not for aggression against the other: there was still a road open to Spain for retraction and redress; and this would be most readily promoted by the presence of a British army on the territory of our ally. Mr. Canning next went into a detail of events relative to the acquisition of her new constitution by Portugal; disclaiming all interference on our part, and explaining the circumstance of its being brought over from Brazil by sir C. Stuart. 'With respect to the character of that constitution,' he observed, 'I do not think it right to offer at present any public opinion; my own I have privately; but, as an English minister, all I wish to say is, may God prosper the attempt made by Portugal to obtain constitutional liberty; and may that nation be as fit to receive and cherish it, as on other occasions she is capable of discharging her duties among European nations!' This sentiment was received by the house with long and continued cheers; after which, he detailed the aggressions of Spain, as well as her motives; expressing an earnest hope that, on hearing of the step we were about to take, that power would act in such a manner as to render hos-

tilities unnecessary : he had set out by declaring, that nothing short of vindicating our national honor could make him endure a thought of war ; but he begged now to be understood, not as dreading war in a good cause, from any distrust of our strength and resources : it was on very different grounds that he dreaded it ; it was because he knew that this country possessed a power to push any war, in which she might engage, to consequences, at the bare notion of which he shuddered : our position at this time was not merely one of neutrality between contending nations, but between adverse principles ; it was a position, which alone preserved that balance of power which was necessary for the welfare and safety of Europe. ‘ Nearly four years of experience,’ said Mr. Canning, ‘ have confirmed that opinion ; and it is to be feared, that the next contest in Europe, if it should extend beyond the narrow limits of Portugal and Spain, will be a war of the most tremendous nature, because it will be a war of conflicting opinions ; and although this country may enter into it with a desire to mitigate and control its horrors, yet she cannot help seeing under her banners all those who are restless and dissatisfied, with or without cause, in every nation with which she may be placed at variance. The consciousness of this fact, the knowledge that we possess such a tremendous power, forces me to feel as I now feel : but it is one thing to have a giant’s strength, and another to use it like a giant : the consciousness that we have this power keeps us safe : our business is not to seek opportunities of displaying it ; but so to keep it, that hereafter the world may see we knew its proper use, while we shrunk from converting the umpire into the oppressor—

Celsa sedet Æolus arce,

Sceptra tenens ; mollitque animos, et temperat iras :

Ni faciat, maria, ac terras, cœlumque profundum

Quippe ferant rapidi secum, verrantque per auras.

The consequences of letting loose those passions which are chained up may be such as will lead to a scene of desolation which no one can contemplate without horror ; and such as I could never lie easy on my couch if I was conscious of having by one hour precipitated. I would bear much, and forbear long ; I would almost put up with any thing that did not touch our national faith and national honor, rather than let slip the furies of war, when we know not whom they may reach, and where the devastation may end : such is the love of peace which the British government acknowledges, and such the duty of peace which the circumstances of the world inculcate. In

obedience to this conviction, and with the hope of avoiding extremities, I will push no farther the topics of this part of the address: let us defend Portugal, whoever may be the assailants, because it is a work of duty; and let us end where that duty ends: we go to Portugal, not to rule, not to dictate, not to prescribe laws: we go only to plant there the standard of England; and where that standard is planted, foreign dominion shall not come.'

The effect of this speech on the house can hardly be described: even Mr. Brougham was charmed into unqualified admiration; and in supporting the motion, declared, 'that the burdens of the country, however oppressive, would be borne cheerfully through the impending struggle, if war should be the result; for now we were governed on wise, liberal, and truly English principles. He thought the Portuguese constitution worthy of that distinguished statesman's patronage, who had the present management of our foreign affairs: the subject had inspired his eloquence with a degree of fervor unprecedented in effect; even (and he could not rank it higher) beyond that right honorable gentleman's former most eloquent orations. He felt, that with the strong and impregnable principles now acted on by our government, no burdens would hinder us, if the day of trial should come, from coping with a world in arms: but the day of trial would not come; the knowledge that these principles were acted on would be a security against it.'

Nothing could be more just than these observations; and the result was exactly what had been anticipated; if such principles had been extensively acted on at an earlier period, and the determination of England had been more pointedly declared in favor of constitutional governments, against the bigotry, the contempt of popular rights, and the tyranny displayed by despots, probably much human suffering, and much diplomatic confusion, would have been prevented: but such principles unhappily did not flourish in the Castlereagh school of politics.

It was fortunate for Mr. Canning's fame that his motion was combated, and an amendment proposed; for he thus became engaged in a reply, which even surpassed the eloquence of his preceding speech. Sir Robert Wilson and Mr. Baring, though they supported the address, had strongly censured government for allowing France to usurp and retain the occupation of Spain: in answer to this, Mr. Canning explained, that when the French army entered Spain, we might, if we chose, have

visited that measure by a war; but such a war would not, in these days, have been the proper method of restoring the balance of power, which varies as civilisation advances, and new nations spring up: to take a leaf from the book of European policy in the times of William III. or of Anne, for supporting that balance now, would be to disregard the march of events, and to regulate our policy by a confusion of facts. 'I admit,' he said, 'that the entrance of a French army into Spain was a measure of disparagement to Great Britain—was a severe blow to the feelings of this country. One of the modes of redress lay in a direct attack on France, through a war on the Spanish soil; the other was to make the possession of Spain itself harmless in rival hands—to make it worse than harmless; to make it injurious to the possessor: this latter mode I have adopted. Do you think that, for the disparagement to England, we have not been compensated? Do you think that, for the blockade of Cadiz, England has not received a full recompense? I looked at Spain by another name than Spain: I looked on that power as Spain and the Indies; and so looking at the Indies, I have there called a new world into existence, and regulated the balance of power; thus redeeming the movement of France, and leaving her own act on her, unmitigated and unredressed; so that she could now thankfully get rid of her responsibility, and shake off a burden too heavy to be borne without complaint. France would now be glad if England would assist her in dispensing with this burden; and the only way of riveting France to the possession of Spain, would be to make that possession a point of honor. I repeat it, the object of the present expedition is not war, but to take the last chance of peace: if England does not go promptly to the aid of Portugal, Portugal will be trampled on, England will be disgraced, and then war will come; come too in the train of degradation: if we wait until Spain have courage to ripen her secret machinations into open hostility, we shall have war; shall have the war of pacificators; and who can tell when that war shall end?'

Never perhaps did political eloquence obtain a greater triumph than on this occasion: everybody, but Mr. Banks and Mr. Hume, appeared touched by the sacred flame; and when the latter gentleman's amendment was put, it received the support of only three or four members; after which the original question was carried with that number of dissentients. On the same night, a similar address in the upper house was moved by lord Bathurst, and seconded by lord Holland; when even the duke

of Wellington, though he lamented the necessity of interference, and endeavoured to screen his *beloved* Ferdinand behind the perfidious character of political servants, captains-general, and inferior ministers, was obliged to confess that a *casus fœderis* existed, which justified the interposition of our troops; while he still hoped that war would be prevented, and trusted for that happy result to the cordial assistance which we might expect from *France*!

The general sentiment of the country seconded that unanimity which prevailed in parliament respecting so important a measure; and the prompt decision of government quickly effected the purpose intended. There was not a moment's delay: the news which made known the imminent peril of our ancient ally arrived on the eighth; the king's message was brought to the house on the eleventh; the discussion took place next day; early on the fourteenth, 5000 troops, under the command of sir William Clinton, began their march towards the coast; the very winds of heaven seemed to favor the righteous cause; and our first detachment appeared in the Tagus on the twenty-fifth. The treachery and dissimulation of Ferdinand instantly gave way to his fears, while the French government recalled the diplomatic instrument of its intrigues; and the independence of Portugal, with its constitution, was for a time preserved: but the movement of a British army produced not effects half so extensive or permanent as the speech of a British minister. Notwithstanding the penal prohibitions with which continental powers are accustomed to intrench themselves against our press, that speech found its way over all the countries of Europe, and into the utmost recesses of despotism; alarming the agents and abettors of tyranny, while it gave encouragement to those who were still engaged in liberating their necks from the yoke of slavery: from that time, not only the heart of the British nation, but the hope of the liberal portion of Europe, was attached to Mr. Canning's ministry; and though the principles of his generous policy were obscured for a time under less liberal and less enlightened administrations, yet their influence is still felt, and awes in some degree the despots of the old, as well as the democrats of the new world. But though sentiments in favor of Mr. Canning were making rapid progress both at home and abroad, that minister himself soon experienced the fatal effects of his popularity: the line of separation which existed between him and a powerful section of the cabinet, who regarded his warmth and eloquence as a fatal demonstration of liberalism,

was now widened ; while his personal assumption of superiority in the house, no less than his open patronage of popular principles, exasperated that jealous spirit with which he was regarded by the high Tories : nor did the language held by this minister, regarding Spain and her colonies, as well as France, fail to rouse the anger of those despotic sovereigns, who had cast their fetters round the liberties of the continent, and who began to see with alarm that revolution which was taking place in the public mind of Great Britain on this subject.

In the eastern part of Europe, the prospects of the Greeks were gloomy, though their perseverance gained for them respect among other nations. The sultan, having accommodated his differences with Russia, proceeded to dissolve the corps of janissaries, to introduce European discipline into his armies, and to reorganize the decaying system of Ottoman government : in the mean time, Missolonghi, the key of western Greece, had fallen before the murderous assaults of Ibrahim Pasha ; and the national assembly made an affecting appeal to the patriotism of their nation, as well as to the generous feelings of European states. The interference of governments was a task of great delicacy and difficulty ; but in every christian country, the melancholy fate of Missolonghi, and the depressed condition of Greece under Ibrahim Pasha and his barbarous Egyptians, produced liberal contributions : nor was it found difficult to negotiate loans among speculators, who became anxious to draw profit even from the distress of suffering patriots : of these resources, a considerable portion was spent in steam vessels and other ships, which never left the countries in which they were built ; and in large contributions to greedy contractors, who disgusted every honest mind by the enormous rapacity which they disguised under the mask of general philanthropy.

The only event in our domestic annals which requires notice, was the opening of the suspension bridge over the Menai Strait on the thirtieth of January. This stupendous structure, projected by Mr. Telford, for the convenience of communication between Great Britain and Ireland, is, in the extreme length of its chains, from their fastenings in the rocks, about 1600 feet ; and the height of the road-way from high-water line is 100 : it has two carriage roads, with an intermediate footpath ; and a very ingenious method is employed to counteract the expansion and contraction of the iron. The suspending power is calculated at 2016 tons, and the weight to be suspended is 342 tons, leaving a disposable power of 1674 tons : this bridge stands among the most surprising efforts of art in Europe.

Parliament resumed its sittings on the eighth of February ; another incident having occurred, during its recess, tending still farther to promote the ascendancy which Mr. Canning had acquired. The duke of York, whose health had been for more than half a year in a state of unequal though alarming danger, expired on the fifth of January ; and by the decease of this prince, whose frank and amiable disposition, together with his great services to our army, induced the nation to overlook the irregularities of his private life, the duke of Clarence became presumptive heir to the crown ; when ministers took that opportunity of proposing an increase of £3000 per annum to his income, as well as £6000 as a jointure to his consort ; and this motion, though strongly opposed by Mr. Hume and others, on the plea that no additional expenses were entailed on his royal highness, was carried by an overwhelming majority. To have placed any other person at the head of our army, as commander-in-chief, except him who had so often led it on to victory, would not only have outraged the feeling of the nation, but even lowered the British character in the estimation of the world : accordingly, the duke of Wellington assumed that high rank with the approbation of all parties ; this approbation, however, was not generally extended to his retention of a seat in the cabinet ; since there were many who traced that strict impartiality which had pervaded the duke of York's administration, in a great degree, to his freedom from ministerial connexions.

At the funeral of his royal highness, which was attended by the cabinet ministers, Mr. Canning caught a severe cold ; and thus laid the foundation of that disease which soon afterwards terminated his valuable life : he was unable to attend the opening of parliament ; and up to the fifteenth of February his state was considered dangerous ; from the sixteenth, his health rapidly improved ; but on the day following, an event occurred which, connected with the foreign secretary's illness, threw the cabinet into a state of great embarrassment : this was the sudden and alarming indisposition of lord Liverpool, who was seized with a fit of paralysis ; from the effects of which he never recovered, though the government continued to go on for a short time nominally under his guidance. As soon as the nature of this attack was known, Mr. Peel set off to Brighton to consult the king ; but Mr. Canning, though resident at that place, was too unwell to join his colleague : before he could reach town, the other members of administration had held frequent meetings, where a strong disinclination was manifested to act under the

right honorable gentleman, if his majesty, in accordance with public expectation, should place him at the head of affairs. On the twenty-second, Mr. Canning was reported to be convalescent, and had an audience of the king: on Tuesday, the twenty-seventh, he came to town; and on the first of March, he appeared in the house, and moved for a committee on the corn laws, which had been twice postponed on his account. As expounder of the plan digested by lord Liverpool, Mr. Canning, after a speech of great length and perspicuity, proposed a scale of duties, varying in proportion to the average price of grain throughout the kingdom: sixty shillings per quarter being taken for wheat, as the point from which the grower was intitled to the protection of a high duty, twenty shillings was proposed for that purpose: if the price fell below sixty shillings, the duty was to increase in a duplicate ratio; if the price rose above that point, it was gradually to decrease, until at seventy shillings importation was to be perfectly free. No vote was taken on the resolutions when first introduced; and the debate was delayed for a week, that every semblance of precipitation regarding so important a measure might be avoided: on the eighth of March, when its discussion was resumed, the plan did not appear to please the zealots of any party: the landed interests desired a higher scale of duties; the manufacturing classes a lower; while many speculators would willingly have operated upon the currency, instead of corn: after frequent debates, however, on its details, and several divisions, the ministerial scheme passed the house of commons by large majorities. Certainly few schemes of legislation seem to have been more ingeniously adapted to the purposes required than that of the 'sliding scale;' which, indicating by its fluctuation the exact difference between those two essential elements of the corn market, supply and demand, impartially regulates prices, protecting the agriculturist against the speculator, the importer against the agriculturist, and the consumer against a combination of the other two. Let the harvest be deficient, and even before it is gathered, foreign corn at a nominal duty comes into the market: let crops be abundant, and the grower is secured against that competition from abroad, which would rob him of all advantage, and disable him from supporting those burthens which are thrown more peculiarly upon cultivators of the land.

In this session the attacks on lord Eldon were led by Mr. D. W. Harvey, a speaker of extraordinary eloquence: on the fifth of April this gentleman moved for returns of the business set down before, and disposed of by, the chancellor,

in equity, bankruptcy, and the house of lords; the object being to fix on him the responsibility of all arrears: but the motion was negatived by 132 votes against 66. Meanwhile sir John Copley, the new master of the rolls, had obtained leave to introduce a bill, with the sanction of the chancellor himself, founded on the measure of 1826; and obviating some of its practical difficulties: this bill, however, had not proceeded far when it became obvious, from the state of lord Liverpool's health, that the responsibility of reforming the practice of the court of chancery must devolve on a new administration.

Circumstances at this time seemed peculiarly favorable to the claims of the Roman catholics; for two of their chief opponents, the duke of York and lord Liverpool, were removed by death and illness; while the influence of Mr. Canning preponderated, in the cabinet: sir Francis Burdett therefore was charged with their petition; and his speech on this occasion opened a debate in the lower house, which lasted two nights, giving full scope to the talents of its principal orators. The grand argument relied on both by the favorers and the opposers of emancipation, was the interpretation of the treaty of Limerick; and Mr. Peel, whose speech made a deep impression on the house, contended, that political privileges were never contemplated by either of the parties to that treaty, which merely secured to the Roman catholics free exercise of their religion, independent of political power: with regard to the general question, he confessed that he distrusted the Romanists, on whose religious faith a scheme of political power was founded; and that he could not contemplate the doctrines of confession, absolution, and indulgences, without a strong suspicion that they were maintained for the purpose of confirming the influence which man exercises on man; nor was it of any consequence that authority be called spiritual, if it practically influences us in our social conduct. Few things he thought more improbable, than the notion that a removal of present disabilities would be a consummation of the wishes and efforts of the papists: if they gained power, they would naturally wish to better the condition of their religious system, to extend its influence over the country, and draw it into closer connexion with government: the consequence of this would be, to bring the catholic and protestant religions into collision in such a manner as might entail destruction on the latter: and what greater evil could be conceived than the confusion which must prevail for ages during the conflict? But though he believed that an admission of the catholic claims would

endanger our constitution, yet if we were satisfied that it would restore tranquillity to Ireland, he would sacrifice his apprehensions of the ultimate result to the attainment of that immense present benefit: this however he could not make up his mind to believe. If the friends of emancipation proposed, after having carried their point, to make the religion of the great majority the religion of the state, and open to them all its high offices, he could understand how such a line of policy might appease and tranquillise the catholics; but this they disavowed: yet, if they proposed to maintain the protestant establishment as that of the state, there would still exist a barrier which the catholics would endeavor to remove. After animadverting on the unjustifiable extent to which the interference of catholic priests had been carried during the late elections, on the neglect shown by their prelates in restraining them, and on the extraordinary asperity of Dr. Doyle's publications, Mr. Peel concluded, with expressing the pain he felt in differing from those persons, for whom personally he entertained a cordial respect, and with whom on almost every other topic he fully agreed: the influence of some great names, he said, had lately been lost to the cause which he supported; but he had never adopted his opinions on it from deference either to high station or to high ability; still less with a view to favor or personal aggrandisement.

Sir John Copley, master of the rolls, whose zeal in the protestant cause had gained him a seat in the house for the university of Cambridge, turned into the tide of his own eloquence copious streams from a pamphlet which Dr. Philpotts,⁵ one of the cleverest writers of the day, had addressed to Mr. Canning; and of which the question of securities occupied a large portion. The whole matter, according to his opinion, was one of expediency; and if the concessions asked for could be granted with safety to the civil liberties and religious faith of protestants, he admitted that the catholics were intitled to them: with regard, however, to securities on these points, he denied that any such had been, or could be, offered: while he instanced several departed statesmen, whom he termed 'a constellation of genius, knowlege, and political ability,' with Mr. Pitt at their head, who had declared in decisive terms their determination not to grant emancipation without special and efficient securities: he even instanced the authority of the present secretary for foreign affairs himself, and of the Irish attorney-general, as having uttered sentiments

⁵ Now bishop of Exeter.

to this effect; that it could not be granted, unless adequate securities were given to protect the country against the danger of foreign interference.

Mr. Plunkett, the attorney-general for Ireland, who immediately answered this speech, observed, that here was a new doctrine taken up by the opponents of catholic emancipation,—that of preparing concession by exaction of securities, and declaring at the same time that no securities which could be given would be efficient; and he asserted, that Mr. Pitt was very unjustly placed at the head of such a school: he also contrasted with it the conduct of lord Liverpool, who had defeated the catholic bill passed by the commons in 1825, when brought into the upper house; not, however, on the ground of inefficient securities; since he had distinctly stated, that if he could discard his objections against the principle of the measure, he should not care a straw about securities; nay, that he could in half an hour frame a clause which would leave them free from all objection. Mr. Canning, who closed the debate, and who had been most pointedly alluded to throughout sir John Copley's speech, after disposing of its argument, ironically vindicated himself for not having concerted a measure of securities with the pope of Rome; because we had not the same facilities which other courts possessed, like those of Prussia, Saxony, and the Netherlands. 'He happened to have seen in some popular tracts, that to correspond with the pope was high treason; therefore when his holiness addressed a complimentary note to our present gracious king, he, as secretary of state, took the opinion of the great law officers on the subject of an answer; and they declared, that if he did reply to the pope's letter, he would incur the penalties of a *præmunire*.' Here Mr. Canning read, amid shouts of laughter, the opinion alluded to, signed 'R. Gifford and John Copley;' on which, the master of the rolls observed, that the honorable gentleman had been reading a private and confidential communication. Mr. Canning then continued: 'It was true, he had made this application in confidence; but he had a right to acquaint the house with it, when he saw occasion: he, being an ignorant person, looked into Burn's Justice; and there he found that the penalties attached to a *præmunire*, were attainder, forfeiture of goods, incapacity to bring an action, and liability to be slain by any one with impunity: as this was a matter touching life and fortune, he could not be expected, after having acquired such knowledge, to go to the pope of Rome; and yet to the pope they must go, if they would

have any security.' The master of the rolls again rose to say that the opinion was private, and the disclosure a breach of confidence; but Mr. Canning maintained, that it was official, and that he had a right to use it; though the circumstance had been unthought of by him, from the period at which it occurred, to a very recent time: but he had seen elsewhere an impeachment on his honor and honesty; he had read in print⁶ an accusation, that he had abandoned all securities: the attack therefore was not unexpected; though the quarter whence it now proceeded was the last from which he could have foreseen it. In this speech Mr. Canning also defended the memory of Pitt; declaring, it was the fixed intention of that great minister to carry the catholic question; to the truth of which assertion he was ready to depose before any tribunal: he avowed his opinion, that the cause had lost ground, in the house, as well as in the country; but he was convinced, that all unfavorable impressions must give way to the effect of repeated discussions; since that which right reason, humanity, and justice loudly demanded, could not fail to find an echo in the breasts of Englishmen. The present anticipations of Mr. Canning proved correct; for the motion was lost by only four voices in one of the fullest houses known; the ayes being 272, and the noes 276.

In consequence of this result, the order of the day in the house of lords for taking into consideration the catholic petition was discharged, on the motion of lord Lansdowne; 'who feared to increase, in the present state of Irish feeling, the disastrous conviction, that a majority of both houses in parliament was opposed to a consideration of the claims of their catholic brethren.' This feeling however in Ireland did not lead to language more menacing or vindictive than that which had been used before the discussion: a general meeting of Romanists in Dublin, after expressing 'the regret and awful forebodings' with which they viewed the vote of the commons,—a vote, which rejected the prayers 'of seven millions of oppressed, injured, and discontented subjects,'—exhorted the people to cultivate peace, and wait calmly the course of events, in the hope that Britain would repent and relax, 'before the catholics were driven to despair.' With much less sense and moderation, a non-intercourse act was talked of, like that which the discontented colonists of America had put into execution; but a plan to deprive Ireland of her market for linen, grain, and provisions, found very few partisans: a scheme of open and inve-

⁶ He alluded to the pamphlet of Dr. Philpotts.

terate hostility against the established church, proposed by other public organs of the party, met with more supporters: 'against that church,' it was said, 'must all their energies be directed; for that church has sworn eternal enmity to the catholics; and they must register a vow against it in heaven;' the repeal of the union also became a favorite subject of agitation; and a notion that the Romanists had been induced to accede to it by the prospect of emancipation, found supporters even in the house of commons. Mr. M. Fitzgerald went so far as to give notice of a motion, recommending the adoption of measures to carry into effect 'the policy of the union:' Mr. Spring Rice also gave notice of a motion for inquiry into the character of the Irish government: events, however, soon occurred, which occasioned the withdrawal of these motions, by convincing the principals concerned in the question that, by temporary repose, they were more likely to obtain their object.

The health of lord Liverpool was now in a hopeless state, but no step was taken to supply his place as premier till the twenty-eighth of March, on which day Mr. Canning was summoned by the king to Windsor. It was well known that dissensions existed in the cabinet; and that serious difficulties were created by a large portion of it, with the lord chancellor at its head, hostile in the highest degree to that gentleman; while a majority in the house of commons, as well as of the people at large, decidedly called on him to take up the mantle of Pitt, and direct the councils of Great Britain: the difficulties of forming an efficient ministry were very great, but precisely calculated to give play to motives of personal consideration, and enable an ambitious statesman to attain his object.⁷

Mr. Canning had been called to this interview merely in his capacity of privy counsellor, to assist his sovereign in re-constructing the cabinet; and the advice which he first proffered, though it bore an appearance of great disinterestedness and self-denial, was in fact utterly impracticable; for it recom-

⁷ Writing on this subject to his daughter, lord Eldon observes, 'this (lord Liverpool's attack) is a most tremendous blow, *under present circumstances*, and its effects on individuals must be important. Heaven knows who will succeed him. Peel went down to Brighton, to inform the king of the event, and is not yet returned. If other things made it certain that he would otherwise succeed him, I should *suppose* Canning's health would not let him undertake the labor of the situation: but *ambition* will attempt anything.'—vol. ii. p. 583. Soon afterwards he says, 'I think—who could have thought it? that Mr. Canning will have his own way. I *guess* that I, Wellington, Peel, Bathurst, Westmoreland, &c. will be out.'

mended, that a ministry should be formed, unanimous in the rejection of catholic emancipation; to forward which arrangement, he professed his own willingness to retire from office: those, however, on whom it would have thrown the responsibility of government saw the state of inefficiency and embarrassment in which this proposition tended to involve them, and instantly rejected it. His majesty accordingly proposed that the plan of administration should remain unchanged; some anti-catholic peer being appointed premier, to prevent such increase of adherents to the catholic cause as a minister of that rank, being its known advocate, would necessarily promote; and also to tranquillise those members who felt unwilling to act under any one of their own number, that had been with them a subordinate in office: to this arrangement, however, which would have excluded Mr. Canning from the grand object of his ambition, he decidedly objected; declaring, that he would never degrade himself by forming part of an administration which considered a person entertaining his views on the catholic question as disqualified to fill the highest office in the state. This resolution, certainly not reconcilable with his practical conduct since 1822, amounted to a declaration, that he would accede to no arrangement which did not place him, or a statesman of his own school, at the head of affairs; and as he could not conceive that the party opposed to his views were less sincere in principle than himself, an inflexible adherence to such a determination put an end to every rational prospect of keeping the cabinet together: on this principle, Mr. Canning in effect declared, that his services could only be secured by the highest office; for even if he had consented that another of his party should be the ostensible head of the cabinet, (and he seems at one time to have thought of Mr. Robinson) he himself, like lord Chatham on a former occasion, would have had the real power. It was perfectly natural that he should be unwilling to resign so splendid a prize now within his grasp, and act under men of less imposing talents and attainments; but it is no less true that this resolution was the cause which broke up the Liverpool administration. He also knew that this would drive from him one of his most able and influential colleagues; for when he mentioned the subject to Mr. Peel, on the twenty-ninth of March, that gentleman declared, without reserve, that a sense of duty would render resignation imperative on him, in the event of Mr. Canning, with his known sentiments on the subject of catholic emancipation, being called to the head of the ministry.

The latter part of February, as well as the whole of March, was spent in attempts to overcome these various difficulties; while opposition, both in parliament and from the press, aided the cause of the foreign secretary: for they felt assured that Mr. Canning must, if appointed premier, fill up from their ranks the void occasioned by the resignation of his colleagues: the delay, however, which had taken place impelled Mr. Tierney, who was aware of existing dissensions, and desirous of hastening their explosion, to oppose the vote of supply on the thirtieth, under pretext that there was no administration responsible for its expenditure: this attempt, though it was defeated on a division, had some effect in hastening a settlement; and, on the second of April, a cabinet meeting took place, when the discussions lasted several hours: next day, sir T. Lethbridge gave notice for a humble address to the king, 'praying him, in his formation of a ministry, to take into serious consideration the importance of its unanimity on questions affecting the vital interests of the empire:' this proposal excited much derision in the house, and was abandoned by its author; but an audience of his majesty was claimed by the duke of Rutland; who, as it was confidently asserted, had been authorised by certain peers to lay before him respectfully their determination not to support Mr. Canning, if, in the exercise of his royal prerogative, he should make that gentleman prime minister: it was said also, that several meetings took place between the foreign secretary and the duke of Wellington, with the professed object of removing from the mind of the former any notion of hostility against him in the breast of his grace and of his friends; but in reality to draw from Mr. Canning, during the course of long conferences, some expression of a wish, 'that the duke should take the government:' also it was reported, that when this scheme failed, Mr. Peel⁸ was commissioned, by command of his majesty, to see Mr. Canning, for the purpose of naming one, 'whose appointment would solve all difficulties;'—the duke of Wellington. 'This bold plunge, however,' says an acute historian,⁹ 'proved as fruitless as the experimental manœuvre: the foreign secretary peremptorily objected to a military premier; and on the following day, his majesty commanded him to propose a plan for re-constructing the administration;' although the offer was said to have been accompanied with a proviso, to please the heads of a certain party,—that

⁸ See Mr. Stapleton's supplementary volume.

⁹ Wallace's History of George IV. vol. iii. p. 301.

the new minister should abandon all right of recommendation to church preferment: this, however, was resolutely refused; for Mr. Canning well knew that the general voice of the nation must prevail; and his anticipations were confirmed by an unconditional surrender of the office into his hands.

A correspondence now took place between the new premier and Wellington; which, after commencing with terms of old affection and esteem, concluded with the coldest expressions of formal politeness: the duke, on the receipt of the secretary's first note, assuring him that he had been instructed by the king to form a new ministry, and soliciting his grace's co-operation, pretended not to know who was to be at the head of that ministry; and, in answer to Mr. Canning's natural expression of surprise, very laconically declined to become a member. This correspondence was laid before the king; and the duke, having sent in his resignation under feelings of considerable irritation, received a communication to the following effect from his majesty, who, from the moment when he surrendered the government into Mr. Canning's hands, persisted in supporting that gentleman with the most commendable integrity and good faith:—'The king receives the duke of Wellington's resignation with the same sentiments of regret, which his grace professes to feel in tendering it.'

The premier, anxious to retain as many of his former colleagues as possible, solicited their adherence to an administration constructed on principles which lord Liverpool had so long sanctioned; but Mr. Peel, adhering to his previous declaration, that with Mr. Canning, or any other friend to catholic emancipation as prime minister, the principles of lord Liverpool's cabinet could not be supported, determined to decline office: lord Eldon stated, that, on account of his advanced age, resignation had long been his wish, and he required only four months to wind up the business of his court; but the answer of a few others was not so decisive. It was now the eleventh of April; and, as parliament would adjourn on the twelfth, it became necessary to communicate some arrangement to the house of commons: accordingly, Mr. Canning, on the morning of the twelfth, attended his majesty, who had already received resignations from the duke of Wellington, lord Westmoreland, lord Bexley, and Mr. Peel; nor had the audience lasted long, before those of lords Eldon and Bathurst also were sent in: if this had been intended for intimidation, the plot would have been laid in vain, for the king instantly confirmed the appointment; which was an-

nounced in the house of commons on the same evening by Mr. C. Wynne, amid deafening shouts of applause: nor was the joy of the country less, or less clearly manifested; for Mr. Canning was at this period in the zenith of his popularity: his early errors were forgotten in his recent exhibition of spirited, manly, and enlightened sentiments; and his faults, which were ascribed to the prejudices of party, and even to his necessities, were all forgiven: his advance to high station by personal qualities and abilities, rather than by the patronage of an oligarchy, whose aim was to control the sovereign as well as the people, peculiarly gratified the latter; while from his liberal domestic policy, and the European fame which he had acquired, they anticipated a worthy successor of that great minister, who may be called the parent of reform; a minister, who, if he had not been interrupted in his progress by the French war, and cut off by the too early stroke of death, would probably have been the greatest innovator recorded in our annals: for, as Mr. Canning, in one of his later speeches, asserted, in applying philosophy to politics, he merely carried into effect Mr. Pitt's declarations.

Of the old cabinet, there now remained only lord Harrowby, with Messrs. Huskisson, Robinson, and C. Wynne; for lord Melville, to the consternation of all Scotland, resigned on the evening of the twelfth; avowing, with a remarkable spirit of candor, the instinct by which he was led—a doubt respecting the stability of the new arrangements: this, however, as it was the last vacancy made, was the first supplied; for Mr. Canning next morning revived the dignity of lord high admiral of England¹⁰ in the person of the heir presumptive to the throne; and the duke of Clarence's acceptance of office created no little dismay among those who had just thrown off the coil: so striking a sign of the times was thought not to have been lost on lord Bexley, who immediately retracted his resignation; neither did sir John Copley, like poor lord Melville, require any securities against the claims of competitors; but he gladly accepted the great seal, with the title of lord Lyndhurst: lord Anglesey succeeded the duke of Wellington as master-general of the ordnance, with a seat in the cabinet; earl Dudley, Mr. Sturges Bourne, and Mr. Robinson, now created lord Goderich,

¹⁰ It had lain dormant 127 years, since the time of Thomas earl of Pembroke, who succeeded prince George of Denmark, the husband of queen Anne: on the present occasion, instead of the usual board of junior lords, a council of four members was appointed to assist the lord high admiral.

were nominated respectively as secretaries for the foreign, home, and colonial departments; lords Bexley and Palmerston, with Messrs. Huskisson and Wynne, retained their situations; the duke of Devonshire was made lord chamberlain; the duke of Portland, privy seal; and lord Harrowby, president of the council: sir John Leach, sir Antony Hart, and sir James Scarlett became respectively master of the rolls, vice-chancellor, and attorney-general: the premier himself occupied, like Mr. Pitt, the two offices of first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer. To supply several places, a negotiation had been opened with the marquis of Lansdowne; but though no official appointments at present resulted from it, his lordship, with sir Francis Burdett and a large body of the whigs, proffered their unofficial support to Mr. Canning's administration: the king's firmness, however, was a tower of strength to his minister. Thus was effected the formation of a government under a premier favorable to the concession of the claims of the Roman catholics: but it was so formed on the express condition, that the question of those claims should be an *open one*; that is, one upon which ministers vote, not unitedly as a cabinet, but each individually according to his own inclination.

The length of time which elapsed before his majesty's decision was made, arose from a natural reluctance to part with men whom he had so long admitted into his councils, and honored with his confidence; but when their own conduct put an end to such scruples, and the dictatorial pretensions which they advanced became personally offensive, he was driven to act on his own feelings of dignity and independence, which happily coincided with the wishes of his people: nothing could have been more fortunate than such a crisis, occurring, as it did, like many others that have been noticed in this history, exactly at the proper time: a large uncompromising body of men, who stuck like leeches to the state, for the purpose of sucking its blood, were thus shaken off: so long, indeed, had they held office, that they had begun to consider their places as a species of property, and to resent any interference with them as an injury or an insult; nor was a measure of reform or public utility to be entertained for a moment, which might possibly militate against the prejudices, or curtail the emoluments of any of the party. Neither ought we to pass unnoticed the unexpected union now effected between some of the leading Tories and the leading whigs; a union which lord Mansfield characterised by a very apposite quotation from the Anti-Jacobin;—'a sudden thought strikes me: let us swear eternal

friendship ;' but still it was a union productive of very important results. On the twenty-seventh of April, the new ministry was gazetted ; and on the thirtieth, his majesty held a court, at which lords Eldon, Westmoreland, and Bathurst, as well as Mr. Peel, severally had audiences to resign their seals of office ; the duke of Wellington being the only seceder who did not attend formally for that purpose : the new ministers also kissed hands on their appointments ; and Messrs. Scarlett and Hart received the honor of knighthood. Mr. Canning, on going to and returning from the palace, was loudly cheered by an assemblage far more numerous and respectable than is generally met with on such occasions : next day, he had to encounter in parliament one of the most virulent oppositions that ever assailed a minister of the crown. 'The premiership,' says Dr. Croly, 'had for twelve years been a bed of slumber : it now fell into the hands of one, who made it a bed of feverish anxiety and bitter wakefulness—George Canning, the first debater, the most dexterous politician, and the happiest wit of the house ; the most perplexed, unhappy, and disappointed of ministers.'¹¹

¹¹ History of George IV. p. 472.

CHAPTER LXV.

GEORGE IV. (CONTINUED.)—1827.

Re-assembling of parliament—Explanations by the seceding members of the cabinet—Formidable opposition to the ministry—A portion of the whig party joins the administration—Rejection of the new corn bill by the lords—Financial statements—Corrupt boroughs—Improvement of the criminal code—Close of the session—Death of Mr. Canning—His character—Lord Goderich prime minister—Dissentions, and dissolution of the cabinet—Duke of Wellington appointed premier—Review of foreign policy—Treaty with France and Russia—Battle of Navarino—Meeting of parliament—Dispute between the duke of Wellington and Mr. Huskisson—State of the finances—Grant to the family of Mr. Canning—State of the currency—Budget—Repeal of the test and corporation acts—Catholic claims—Resignation of Mr. Huskisson and other members of the cabinet—Prorogation of parliament—War between Russia and Turkey—State of Portugal—Disturbances in Ireland—Recall of the marquis of Anglesey—Death and character of the earl of Liverpool—Trial and execution of Burke at Edinburgh—Opening of the London University and St. Katharine Docks—Review of foreign policy.

THE house of commons re-assembled on the first of May; but so much time had been lost through the dissolution of the old administration, and the hostility of parties now occasioned so much more to be consumed, that very little public business was completed during the session: Mr. Peel took an early opportunity to state the reasons for the late secession; disclaiming at the same time all intention of opposing the new government, and carrying himself free from every appearance of a factious spirit. 'I retired from office,' he said, 'because, from the first moment of my public life, I have taken an active and decided part on a great and vital question,—that of extending political privileges to the Roman catholics: for eighteen years I have constantly offered an uncompromising, but I hope a temperate, fair, and constitutional resistance to every proposition for granting to them any farther concessions. My opposition is founded on principle: I think the continuance of those bars, which prevent the acquisition of political power by the catholics, necessary for the maintenance of our constitution, and for the interests of

our established church: it is not merely, that my honorable friend differs in opinion from me on this important question: but the change in administration occasions the transfer of all that influence and power which belongs to the office of a prime minister, into the hands of one who will use it for the purpose of forwarding an object which I have always resisted: it is not a transfer of that influence and power from one ordinary man to another ordinary man; but from the most able opponent of the catholic claims to their most zealous and eloquent advocate.' Mr. Peel then proceeded to justify the course taken by his late colleagues, who had also resigned office, as affording 'a splendid example of disinterested conduct to all public men:' he vindicated them from the charge of acting in concert, or in a spirit of cabal; declaring that he himself had never held any communication with the lord chancellor, respecting the course he intended to pursue; neither did he know his lordship's intentions: the same, he believed, might be asserted of every other member of the late cabinet.

This speech was received with loud cheers, and elicited much applause from Mr. Brougham, who at the same time declared his determination to support the liberal policy of Mr. Canning's administration, against any attempts of his late colleagues, and present opponents, to drive him from the helm.¹ The minister himself then rose to explain the course of his own proceedings in a luminous and well-digested harangue. 'The house,' he said, 'greatly mistakes my situation, if they believe it to be one of gratified ambition: from the beginning of the discussions on the catholic claims, I felt that the separation of my honorable friend and myself was inevitable, and not far remote: would to God I could now persuade myself that his retirement will be but for a short time! Had the necessity which has made the retreat of one of us inevitable been left in my hands, my decision would have been for my own resignation, and against that of my right honorable friend: my first object was, to quit office; my next, to remain

¹ Having lost the office of attorney-general to the queen at her death, he now received a silk gown and a patent of precedence from the new ministry, whom *he* supported in the house of commons. Having long been a fierce assailant of lord Eldon—he ascribed his long detention from that distinction to his lordship's influence; but, he afterwards became convinced that this was not the case, and made the *amende honorable* to the chancellor. His disappointment arose from the king's indignation at his speeches made during the queen's trial.—See *Life of Lord Eldon*, vol. iii. p. 2.

in it, with all my old colleagues, exactly on the same terms as usual regarding this very catholic question.' He then detailed the circumstances which preceded his appointment. 'If,' said he, 'I had submitted in my person, as an advocate of the catholic claims, to the principle of exclusion, I should have dishonored myself: such a submission would have been a badge of helotism; an indelible disgrace to my political life.' Mr. Dawson, a brother-in-law of Mr. Peel, having vehemently attacked the union of the whigs with Mr. Canning's party, their disinterested support was ably defended by sir Francis Burdett, as likely to promote enlightened principles of government both at home and abroad; more especially the cause of religious liberty.

The house of lords met on the following day; and when an opportunity was given to the ex-ministers of explaining their conduct, lord Eldon began by declaring that the accusation made against him of having attempted an unconstitutional dictation to his sovereign, was a base and scandalous falsehood: his opinion was, and always had been, that if the catholic claims were conceded, the religious liberties of this country were at an end; and that, with its religious liberties, would perish its civil freedom: holding such opinions, it was impossible that he could give in to what must be the views of the new minister, whether those views were to be carried into immediate execution, or suspended for the better securing of his purpose. Could he honestly retain office under an administration formed on principles so hostile to his own? He could not allow that the new cabinet had been formed on the principles of lord Liverpool, who had been as zealous, honest, and candid in opposing the catholic claims, as he had no doubt the premier was in supporting them. As to the mode of his resignation, he wholly disclaimed the imputation of having concerted it with Mr. Peel, though he professed for that gentleman sentiments of high regard and esteem.²

² Mr. Canning himself, in a speech made in the house of commons, May 3rd, vindicated his great opponent on this point. 'It was bare justice,' he said, 'to lord Eldon to say, that his conduct was that of a man of the highest feelings of honor; and that throughout, it had been above all exception.' When this veteran and really honest lawyer resigned the high office which he had held longer than any chancellor in the annals of our history, the king fell upon his neck and wept: at his departure, his majesty placed in his hand a small key, saying, 'he hoped that he would find at home a token not only of his present regard, but of that which he must feel to the latest hour of his life.' This gift of the sovereign

As the duke of Wellington's retirement, not only from administration, but from the command of the army, which was not a cabinet office, seemed to indicate a more decided hostility than that of other seceders, it excited proportionally a greater degree of interest: on both points his grace entered into a full explanation of his conduct and the motives of it. After adverting to abuse poured on him from a press, which, if not in the pay, was under the direct influence of government, he proceeded to notice the correspondence between himself and Mr. Canning; complaining that he had not only been left with less information, but treated with less respect and deference than his colleagues: he (the duke of Wellington) was not requested to come and receive explanations concerning evident omissions in the letter first sent to him, nor was he referred to any person for information on those points; although, as he afterwards learned, his colleagues had been invited to go to the minister, and receive any explanations which they might require—or the minister himself had gone to them for such a purpose: still he determined that no pique of this kind should stop an amicable communication; and in that spirit he carried on the correspondence; in that spirit he wished to contrive means of continuing in his majesty's councils: but when he found that the right honorable gentleman himself was to be at the head of affairs, he considered whether he could consistently with his avowed principles join the new administration; and finding it to be impossible, he felt obliged to decline office. With regard to the question which he had put to Mr. Canning on this point, and which was said to have given offence:—‘Those,’ said his grace, ‘who formed part of lord Liverpool’s cabinet knew well what it was to which they pledged themselves; for they knew that his lordship was conscientiously opposed to all changes in the existing form of government: but those who coalesce with the right honorable gentleman, can have no idea how far this coalition may carry

was a beautiful tankard of silver gilt, having an accession medal of the king embodied in its lid, and bearing a very flattering inscription. His lordship feeling some delicacy in accepting this present apart from his colleagues, consulted them on the subject; and their answer was, ‘You must accept the tankard, and provide wine for us to drink out of it.’ A very gratifying address was presented to the ex-chancellor, by the masters in chancery, expressing their grateful sense of his kindness to them throughout the very long period in which he had held the great seal, and bearing testimony to his great learning and unsullied integrity.—See his Life, by Mr. H. Twiss, vol. ii.

them: the new minister is the most able, active, and zealous partisan of changes with which the country is at present threatened: the principles of the noble earl were principles by which any man might safely abide; the principles of the right honorable gentleman fluctuate every day.' Who could have supposed, that, within the short space of two years, the duke of Wellington's cabinet would have repealed the test acts, and granted catholic emancipation; whilst its leader declared that an adherence to lord Liverpool's principles would introduce all the horrors of civil war into the realm? But until governments take a more active part in forming public sentiment, and leading public opinion, they must ever be subjected to these mortifications: if statesmen rely too much on mere executive duties, on the formation or strengthening of parties, and on the preservation of old institutions, under circumstances and times totally different from those in which such institutions were established, the current of public intelligence will run rapidly by them, and force the most violent changes on the administration, with which they ought to have originated.

Before the duke concluded this part of his explanation, he adverted to the motives which had been imputed to him, of resigning office because he was not made prime minister himself; on which occasion was heard his memorable declaration,—'that he not only felt himself unwished for, but actually disqualified for any such station; that to have accepted it in place of the military office which he already held, would have argued him mad, or worse than mad.' With regard, however, to his recent resignation even of that military post, his grace observed,—'that, although not a cabinet office, it was one which placed its possessor in a constant and confidential relation with the king and his government: with the prime minister the commander-in-chief is in communication every day; he has not a control even over the army, the chief direction of which is placed in that minister's hands: at the same time, the premier himself cannot withdraw any part of the army from a foreign station without consulting the commander-in-chief; he cannot make up his budget, or introduce any reform into the organisation of the army, without seeking his opinion. No political sentiments, however, would have prevented him from retaining his office under ordinary circumstances; but from the tone and tenor of the communications he had received from his majesty, from the nature of the invitation given to him by the right honorable gentleman in his first letter, and from the contents of the last which he had received

from Mr. Canning by his majesty's command, he saw that he could not remain with credit to himself or advantage to the country: his line of conduct had not been hastily adopted, though he had been most wantonly and unjustly abused.'

The other seceding peers justified their retirement generally on the same ground of political principle which had been taken by the duke of Wellington; except that lords Melville and Bathurst expressed an opinion that with the chasm left by the secession of such men as the duke of Wellington, lord Eldon, and Mr. Peel, no administration could be formed with sufficient stability and capacity for governing the country: lord Bexley assigned his resignation to the fear of not being allowed freedom of opinion regarding a vital question; and justified his resumption of office, by the discovery that he had been in error on that point: all the noble lords, however, expressly disclaimed any idea of concert or confederacy in their plans; though the coincidence was suspicious, and they acknowledged its singularity.

Viscount Goderich, who had the task of defending the new administration in the upper house, declared, that so far from casting any imputation of conspiracy and cabal on his former colleagues, he verily believed, that if there had been more communication among them, much of the mischief and disorder which had occurred might have been prevented. If the government, as at present constituted, was not altogether satisfactory, that was not the fault of him or of his honorable and noble friends: the object of Mr. Canning had been to keep the elements of the late ministry together; but they had fallen away without any fault of his: was he then in such a case, to say to his majesty,—'I will run away also, and leave you in such a predicament as no sovereign was ever placed in before?'

As the chief strength of the seceders lay in the house of lords, the desultory warfare that ensued was principally confined to that region. The marquis of Lansdowne defended the junction of his party with the new ministry, as not occasioned by any sudden impulse, but by the identity which existed between its principles, and the spirit of those measures which government had been for some time pursuing in our foreign and domestic policy: he admitted to their full extent the reasons which noble lords had given for their own resignations, and the manner in which they had accounted for so remarkable a coincidence; but he could not help expressing surprise that government had been able to go on so long; having been conducted, as it now appeared, by ministers who did not think

proper to communicate with each other on the most important question by which they could be interested.

Other noble lords spoke with less decorum, and indulged in more personalities than the principal parties concerned: among these, lords Mansfield, Winchelsea, and Ellenborough were especially distinguished, though their hostility to ministers rested on distinct grounds; for lord Ellenborough, as a friend to catholic emancipation, thought their appointment was fraught with fatal injury to that question: nothing, he said, had advanced the catholic claims so much as discussion; yet now all discussion was to be abandoned. The other two peers expressed a determination of testing the principles of the new cabinet at once; and gave early notice of motions on the catholic question, as well as on the state of the nation; neither of these, however, was brought to a hearing; and the retired ministers exhibited as little concert when out of office as they had displayed in their resignation: no systematic opposition was organised; no regular plan of tactics pursued: no leader of eminence selected: Mr. Peel kept studiously aloof from the inconvenience of being placed in such a situation; and the task of administering castigation to ministers fell principally on sir Thomas Lethbridge, who was unfortunately deficient in fluency of speech. Frequent interrogations were put to Mr. Canning, with a view of drawing out from him what was supposed to be the secret history of his administration; but he at last positively refused to give any answer, unless the matters aimed at were regularly brought forward by motion: there was consequently much vituperation, but very little elucidation of facts.

The same desultory system of hostility was pursued in the house of lords; but there the condemnation of the coalition was more loudly and vehemently expressed. The duke of Newcastle, in presenting a petition against the corn laws, called on every honest man and friend to the country to assist in expelling from office 'the most profligate minister that ever was in power.' Lord Londonderry declared, that 'when he looked at the building which had been erected, he found it divested of all its main pillars, and constructed merely of a sort of rubbish: the artificer had shown great dexterity in forming it; nor could he have found out such a mass of *rubbish* in any other quarter, composed as it was of the two parties: he had made a dexterous effort to un-whig a portion of the whigs, and to un-tory a part of the tories.' Lord Goderich acknowledged the compliment paid to himself; but

lord King, in a happier mood, retorted on the noble marquis, by informing him, 'that every person practically acquainted with building, understands by the term rubbish, that portion of the materials which is *sent away*.' The most powerful assistance, however, on the side of the seceders, was found, where they little expected it, in lord Grey; who, determining 'to stand by his order,' formally announced his want of confidence in the new ministry: though he gave to the members of his party, coalescing with that ministry, credit for disinterestedness, he could see nothing in it which called for his support: it was said to be formed on the principle of lord Liverpool's administration; but that consisted in an exclusion of the catholic question: was this then, he asked, the principle of the British government? Was the catholic question to be prohibited as a cabinet measure? If so, his determination was taken. The whole political career of the new premier was then reviewed by his lordship, who expressed himself opposed to every part of it; and Mr. Canning's noted declaration of calling into existence the republics of the new world was attacked with considerable severity. But he was said to be a friend to civil and religious liberty: true, he supported catholic emancipation, and at the same time proclaimed his opposition to a repeal of the test and corporation acts: he would not dwell on his known opposition to parliamentary reform; for that question, it must be admitted, had not been so uniformly supported, nor had it public opinion so strongly in its favor, as that any one should make it a *sine quâ non* in joining an administration: but he could not conceal from himself the fact, that within a few years, numerous laws had been passed hostile to civil liberty, every one of which had received the right honorable gentleman's assent; and unless he could retrace his steps, and erase some that still remained in the statute-book, no confidence ought to be reposed in him as a friend to civil liberty. Nothing could be farther from his (lord Grey's) intention, than to combine with the opponents of government, from whom he differed, on most questions, as widely as the poles were asunder; neither could he join those who supported it: the only course therefore left to him was, to pursue the same principles which he had professed through life; and when he found the measures of ministers agreeing with those principles, to give them his support; when repugnant, to meet them with his opposition. 'This,' says Mr. Wallace, 'was an unexpected and serious blow; for it shook public confidence in the new arrangements: it was such

a blow, as lord Chatham, by a deliberate formal declaration of the same kind, gave to the first Rockingham administration. The two cases had a striking resemblance: both ministries were partial conquests over an exclusive and vicious system of government; both had to contend with a court oligarchy, and an adverse bias in the mind of the sovereign; in both cases there was a present compromise of principles with a view to their future triumph; while a certain analogy of public station and personal character warranted the supposition, that lord Grey, like lord Chatham, was influenced by personal ambition and impatient pride: the effect, however, was chiefly felt by his own party, the whig allies of Mr. Canning: the uncompromising consistency, high ground, and stately solitude of lord Grey, gave a seeming air of littleness and desertion to those who had left his side to group themselves behind the new minister.³

Soon after Mr. Canning's elevation, the king's declaration to the archbishop of Canterbury and bishop of London, 'that he was opposed as firmly as his father had been to the pretensions of the papists,' was made public to a meeting of prelates at Lambeth palace, and announced in the house of lords: it became evident therefore that this was a measure not to be forced. Repeal of the test and corporation acts was another subject, with a compromise of which the whigs were reproached; but neither was this urgent: so that every question, which could have brought any party in this coalition to the test, and discovered how far they were inclined to compromise their opinions on matters concerning which great difference was known to exist among them, was avoided: and under such circumstances, some of them took office, near the close of the session, when the minister became more firmly seated: thus lord Lansdowne was appointed secretary for the home department; lord Carlisle, privy seal; and Mr. Tierney, master of the mint. The whigs, in fact, being too weak to carry the measures which they most anxiously desired, determined to wait their time, until the power of that minister, who had loosened the bands of tory domination, should be consolidated; it was therefore thought prudent to drop all questions which might bring his strength to a test too rude: they never professed to abandon catholic emancipation, the repeal of the test and corporation acts, or parliamentary reform: it was only to secure ultimate success for those

³ History of George IV. vol. iii. p. 309.

measures, that they resolved not to press them immediately, while they supported a premier who, in some respects, was opposed to them. This appeared the only method of breaking up that immense power which the tory party had acquired, and of introducing eventually what they considered improvements in our social system: their policy was marked out by the peculiarity of their situation.

The opposition also now received a more regular form and abler direction; when Mr. Peel, laying aside the tone of moderation and urbanity which he had previously assumed, gave indications of a decidedly hostile spirit; on which occasion, Mr. Canning declared, that 'he rejoiced to see the standard openly raised; since he always preferred direct hostility to hollow professions or pretended neutrality;' and the cheers with which this declaration was received showed the progress of liberal opinions among the commons of Great Britain.

In the house of lords, however, where the tories were more numerous and more adroit, the new corn bill, which had been sent up before the recess, furnished them with an opportunity of triumph. Although this measure had originated in the late cabinet, and came recommended by the approbation of lord Liverpool, an amendment was moved by the duke of Wellington, for which he professed to have the sanction of Mr. Huskisson, prohibiting the removal of foreign corn from bond until the price of wheat should have reached sixty-six shillings a quarter:⁴ and this proposal, though completely at variance with the principle of the bill, which provided for the admission of corn at all times on payment of a duty proportionate to the averaged market price, was supported by the high tory party, as well as by many peers, who preferred their own interests as landowners to any considerations of commercial policy; so that ministers were left in a minority of 122 to 133; and the bill, when returned to the commons thus shackled, was eventually rejected: but as some expedient became necessary to prevent a recurrence of that alarm which had arisen last year, on account of scarcity, a temporary bill was prepared, and suffered to pass both houses, permitting the

⁴ A misunderstanding and long correspondence on this subject arose between the duke and Mr. Huskisson; the latter of whom declared, that the consent given by him applied only to corn already in bond, or that might be in bond, when the law came into operation; a permanent restriction, like that contained in the amendment, never having been contemplated by him.

release of foreign corn from bond, on the same scale of duties as that proposed by the measure just abandoned.

On the first of June, Mr. Canning brought forward the statement of supplies, &c., in his new character as minister of finance. The public accounts, though presenting few novel features, were prepared and explained with a degree of ability and candor which secured the confidence of the house and of the country : by a review of income and expenditure during the last four years, it appeared, that on an expenditure of £230,000,000, including the annual sinking fund of £5,000,000, there was an apparent deficiency of £1,265,687 ; but against this was to be placed the amount of advances from the exchequer, either in loans to carry on public works, or for beneficial purchases, which the public had in possession as available securities for repayment : the amount of excess in the advances for the four years was near £2,000,000 ; so that in fact there remained, as a real surplus of income beyond expenditure, something more than £1,100,000. The minister having suggested the propriety of providing for this temporary deficiency by an issue of exchequer bills, his proposal was readily admitted ; and the supplies for the year, amounting to £57,500,000, including the sinking fund, were voted without opposition.

As is usual in the first session of a new parliament, the reports of election committees disclosed scenes of gross corruption. Colonel Maberly and Mr. Sykes brought before the house samples of this from the boroughs of Northampton and Leicester, where enormous sums, abstracted from corporation funds, had been expended in defraying the expenses of candidates ; But such an application of public money was defended by Mr. Peel, and motions for committees of inquiry were negatived by considerable majorities : two boroughs, however, appeared so pre-eminent in dishonesty, that the most determined advocates of the old system could not wholly ward off retributive justice. A petition had been put in against the return for Penryn ; and though corrupt practices could not be traced to the sitting members, yet such enormities were disclosed, that Mr. Legh Keck, chairman of the committee, was impelled by a sense of duty to bring forward certain resolutions, in which he was supported by the whole house, with the exception of the sitting members ; and even they rather asserted their own personal purity, than denied the actual existence of the alleged corruption. Mr. Keck's motion was accordingly assented to ; and a bill was brought in

for the more effectual prevention of bribery and corruption in that borough, which had received some very severe rebukes in the years 1807 and 1819. A difference of opinion prevailed regarding the remedy to be applied, or the punishment inflicted : Mr. Keck himself proposed, not the disfranchisement of the borough, but merely an extension of its elective franchise to the adjoining hundreds ; while lord John Russell wished the example of disfranchisement set in the case of Grampound to be followed up, and the elective privileges of Penryn transferred to some populous and unrepresented town : he therefore moved, as an amendment, ‘ that the borough be excluded hereafter from returning burgesses to serve in parliament : ’ the original motion was supported by the ministry ; for Mr. Canning himself thought a verdict of guilty must be given, although sufficient guilt had not been proved to warrant extreme punishment : the amendment, however, supported by lord Althorp, lord Milton, Mr. Brougham, and others, who declared that mercy to Penryn would be extreme injustice to every other disfranchised borough, and that a transfer of its privileges to the adjoining hundreds would merely bestow them on a few wealthy individuals, was carried by a majority of 124 to 69.

With regard to East Retford, the election had been declared void, on evidence of general and notorious bribery ; the house accordingly resolved, that no writ should issue until that evidence had been taken into consideration : the result was, that leave was given for a bill of disfranchisement ; and, as Manchester was generally looked to as a recipient of the forfeited privileges of Penryn, so Birmingham was contemplated as the place to which those of East Retford might be transferred : the session however closed before any efficient proceedings took place with regard to either of these boroughs ; yet the facts elicited by investigation disclosed a scene of extensive corruption ; and the conduct of that tory party which favored the old system, and which, by screening or palliating such corruption, prevented the transfer of their forfeited privileges to towns which had a strong claim to parliamentary representation, brought the question of reform in the house of commons almost to a close. Nothing can be more unjust toward the whigs than to accuse them of precipitating that measure, or of designing to introduce into the constitution changes so extensive as those which ultimately were effected : their constant aim and their reiterated efforts were to reform parliament gradually ; to punish known instances of corruption ; and

gradually to extend the elective franchise, until it comprehended a larger portion of our population, and satisfied those whose voice could be no longer stifled : but their opponents constantly met them with all the obstacles and prejudices which arise from self-interest, as well as a mistaken view of the constitution : and perhaps there never was a doctrine which did more injury to the cause of its professors than that which converted the elective franchise, a sacred trust given to a portion of the community for the benefit of all, and which in its origin was thought a burden rather than a privilege, into a species of private property, convertible to the direct profit of those in whom it was invested, to be dealt with as tenderly, and paid for as punctually, as the land which descends to a person from his ancestors. The pernicious effects and special deformity of this doctrine, when carried out to its full extent, were perceived in many of those Augean stables, which were subsequently swept out by the besom of municipal reform.

Mr. Peel, though he had resigned office, still proceeded with his unostentatious improvements of the criminal code ; and five acts passed, which consolidated into one body the whole law regarding offences against property, purified from an incredible quantity of ancient rubbish, and advantageously simplified in all its arrangements. The first of these five acts repealed about 137 different statutes, wholly or in part, commencing with the charter *de foresta* of Henry III. : the second removed doctrines, which had been hitherto an encumbrance to the statute-book, or laid down general rules applicable to the whole criminal code : it intirely abolished the benefit of clergy in cases of felony ; appointed certain punishments for offences to which no special statute affixed any particular penalty ; relieved the discharged prisoner from severe official expenses ; and purified our law from a load of obscure verbiage : the third contained the law of offences against property in its new and simplified form ; bringing the various species of crime into one view ; assigning to each its plain description, with its precise punishment ; and removing distinctions which had often given origin to embarrassing doubts : it abolished the distinction between grand and petty larceny ; defined clearly the crime of burglary ; while it cleared away many subtilties regarding 'possession,' and the 'conversion of possession,' in the law of embezzlement, as well as in the wire-drawn distinctions of larceny and fraud ; it also mitigated the rigor of the penal law, while it recognised four classes of punishments, in the first of which only was that of death ; those crimes

being plainly set forth to which each was applicable: the fourth of this series of statutes comprised offences which consist, not in feloniously appropriating the property of another, but in maliciously injuring it; and while it reserved capital punishment for arson, for the demolition of buildings or machinery by rioters, for showing false lights to a vessel, &c., it left other kinds of injury to be repaid by transportation or imprisonment: altogether, the number of capital offences was considerably diminished; in many cases also a summary mode of procedure was introduced, to save various petty offenders, or supposed offenders, from long imprisonment, before the charges against them could be brought before a grand jury: the last statute regulated the redress to be sought from the hundred by persons whose property had been injured during riots, and laid down the mode of applying for such remuneration.

The close of this session, on the second of July, was soon followed by a public calamity, which again dismembered the government, and disappointed all those hopes which the genius and enlightened principles of Mr. Canning had raised in the British nation. Parliament had no sooner separated than this able minister issued orders to the heads of different departments, that they should transmit to him accurate and detailed accounts of the expenses connected with their several establishments, with a view to the reduction of our national burdens: on the fifteenth of July he became seriously indisposed; but after a few days of rest, he determined to resume his official duties, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his medical attendants: on the twenty-fifth, he retired, for change of air, to the beautiful seat of the duke of Devonshire at Chiswick; but the fatigues and cares of office, with the desertion and bitter hostility of his late colleagues, acting on a frame naturally irritable, and enfeebled by recent illness, hastened his dissolution, just when the ebullition of that hostility was contributing to elicit his genuine constitutional principles. His disease terminated in a severe inflammation of the bowels; and, after suffering excruciating tortures, he breathed his last, on the eighth of August, in the same room where his great predecessor, Charles James Fox, expired: he was buried in Westminster Abbey, at the foot of Pitt's grave; and his funeral, though private, was attended by a large concourse of noble and estimable personages, among whom there was scarcely one to whom the illustrious deceased was not endeared by the ties of relationship, or by the recollections of friendship and kindness.

The public character of Mr. Canning was clearly seen in

the altered policy of our government, both foreign and domestic, during his connexion with the Liverpool administration: his ambition, like that of Chatham, to whom as a minister and statesman he bore the nearest resemblance, became lofty and imperious, but directed to noble ends; to the glory of his own country, and the advancement, through her greatness, of other nations: his anxiety was, that all should benefit, not only by her commercial prosperity, but by the blessings of her constitution; and when he was constrained to wield her thunders, it was only to check the spirit of despotic tyranny, and to keep Great Britain in her natural sphere, as protectress of those who aspired to freedom. He exhibited a splendid contrast to certain characters that succeeded him; who, having entered on public life as the advocates of liberal and patriotic sentiments, degenerated into bigoted defenders of antiquated opinions, and selfish supporters of intolerable abuses: Mr. Canning, on the contrary, though party introduced him into the senate, and tory principles, as well as a subtle and intriguing spirit, long secured to him a place in administration, gradually imbibed, and became insensibly influenced by, the free spirit of our noble constitution; until at length, enlightened by experience, he cast off the trammels of that oligarchy with which early ambition had associated him, but to which he owed no natural allegiance: being determined to uphold the noble fabric reared by our forefathers, he contemplated with horror any attempt to endanger its foundation, or to alter its character; but when he found that the principles which he once professed began to threaten its safety, he abandoned them as far as he thought expedient; and, conciliating his political opponents without submitting to their dictation, he availed himself of their assistance to carry on his measures of regeneration. England regretted in him the most accomplished orator that the enlightened spirit of the age had yet produced; and the liberal portion of Europe mourned over the loss of his moral influence, as a calamity to the world at large: the effects of his death were almost immediately felt in the affairs of Portugal, and the settlement of those great political interests, which were involved in the independence of Greece, and the impending rupture between Russia and the Porte: the administration, however, which Mr. Canning had formed, resolved that they would attempt to conduct the government without any other change, except that distribution of offices which his lamented death made necessary: lord Goderich therefore became first lord of the treasury; being succeeded by Mr. Huskisson, as

head of the colonial department ; while the duke of Wellington, heedless of public opinion, which knew not how to reconcile his resumption of office with the declaration that personal pique had no influence on his resignation, yielded to the earnest request of his sovereign, and accepted the command of the army, but without a seat in the cabinet. The place of chancellor of the exchequer was still vacant ; and was understood to have been declined by Messrs. Huskisson and Tierney, because they wished for the appointment of lord Althorp ; but the nomination of Mr. Herries, a treasury clerk, brought up in the Vansittart school, and in the decided interest of the tories, took all the whig members of the cabinet by surprise. Lord Lansdowne, understanding that this selection was made at the dictation of the king, tendered his resignation : on being assured, however, that the recommendation came from lord Goderich himself, and being graciously requested by his majesty, who was anxious to avoid the fatigue of new arrangements, not to precipitate a dissolution of the present ministry, his lordship consented to retain office ; but though he wished to strengthen his own party by introducing lord Holland into the administration, this suggestion was overruled.

It soon became manifest that the cabinet had lost, with its great leader, all those preservative qualities which it once possessed ; and lord Goderich, a man of unquestionable integrity, who, like the Roman emperor, would have been thought worthy of power had he not obtained it, showed himself lamentably deficient in that energy, judgment, and firm resolution, which was wanted to keep together the discordant elements of his administration : this plainly appeared, when he proposed to redeem a pledge given by his predecessor, to appoint a committee for the investigation and reform of our finances, in the ensuing session. As it became necessary to fix on a chairman for this important measure, Mr. Tierney, the most active member in the whig section of the cabinet, proposed lord Althorp, as a man whose honor and independence were unimpeachable : lord Goderich expressed no objection ; but, observing that the appointment principally concerned the house of commons, referred Mr. Tierney to Mr. Huskisson, its ministerial leader ; and no objection having been made in that quarter, lord Althorp was applied to, and his consent obtained : the subject, however, by some oversight or intention, had not been mentioned to Mr. Herries, who, as chancellor of the exchequer, was more immediately concerned in the proposed investigation ; and who naturally felt himself entitled to have the initiative in affairs

connected with his own department: but it was only on the twenty-eighth of November, that Mr Herries, calling at the colonial office, accidentally saw a list of the committee and its chairman, drawn out by Mr. Tierney: on the subject being discussed, the chancellor of the exchequer was thought to have acquiesced in the appointment; but subsequently, speaking in his place, he denied this to have been the case; declaring that, with unfeigned respect for the private character of lord Althorp, he objected to his nomination as chairman of the finance committee: at all events, not more than twenty-four hours elapsed before he saw lord Goderich, and informed him, that, after maturely considering lord Althorp's political views, and decided opinions on finance, he must resign office, if it were determined to persevere in the appointment: on the other hand, the retention of Mr. Huskisson, who considered himself pledged to lord Althorp, became involved in the question, and occasioned no little annoyance to the premier: about the same time also, news of the victory of Navarino came to embarrass still farther this distracted ministry; so that lord Goderich, wearied with his situation, and estranged, as it was said, from ambition by the loss of an only child, determined to resign: accordingly, on the eighth of January, he went down to Windsor, laid his difficulties before the king, and dissolved an administration, to which his majesty declared he would have been true if its members had been true to themselves.

After some unsuccessful attempts to supply lord Goderich's place, the duke of Wellington was commissioned to reconstruct the cabinet; and, with the exception of lord Eldon, who was at length invalidated, the Liverpool party was recalled to the sweets of office. His grace himself, relinquishing the post of commander-in-chief to lord Hill, presided over the treasury; Mr. Peel succeeded lord Lansdowne in the home department; and lords Bathurst and Ellenborough became respectively president of the council, and keeper of the privy seal; viscount Melville and the earl of Aberdeen were made president of the board of control, and chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster; while lord Lyndhurst as chancellor, Mr. Huskisson and earl Dudley as colonial and foreign secretaries, lord Palmerston as secretary at war, and Mr. C. Grant as president of the board of trade, all retained their seats in the present arrangement: Mr. Goulburn succeeded Mr. Herries as finance minister; but the removal of this latter gentleman to the mastership of the mint was considered by the whigs as a proof that he had undertaken his former office from other

motives than qualification or choice: all circumstances however considered, that party had much more reason to complain of their own colleague, Mr. Tierney: the friends of the late minister, especially Mr. Huskisson, lost character with the public by thus clinging to place; as did Mr. Scarlett for casting aside his whig principles to obtain it;⁵ but the duke of Wellington, who had taken office, notwithstanding his own declaration of aversion and incapacity, soon showed that the latter disqualification at least was visionary.

While the Goderich administration was tottering to its fall, the foreign policy bequeathed to it by Mr. Canning occasioned difficulties, with which his feeble successors were incompetent to contend. In the present complicated relations subsisting between European states, it is always difficult, and often impossible, to unravel the thread of general politics: but as far as regards the interference of christian powers in the affairs of Greece, under Mr. Canning's auspices, the common cause of humanity seems to have had more influence than usual on diplomatic counsels: not only the commerce of the Levant was destroyed by the present state of warfare, but all christendom was scandalised by the atrocious cruelties which the Turks exercised on those whom they designated as rebels against their authority: such a state of things could not be suffered any longer to exist; yet it is doubtful how far the sympathy of British, and especially of French, statesmen would have carried them, had they not received intimation, that the emperor Nicholas was preparing to step in at the very crisis when the horrors inseparable from a reconquest of Greece would have sanctified his ambition in the eyes of Europe. Teased by importunity, and desirous of abridging unpleasant discussions, the Reis Effendi put into writing the ultimatum of the Porte, and sent it on the tenth of June to all the christian legations: this paper, though obscured by an oriental prolixity of style, contained much acute reasoning, which could hardly be refuted on the common principles of diplomacy, while it announced the

⁵ 'Poor Wetherell,' says lord Eldon (Life, vol. iii. 27), 'who gallantly resigned the office of attorney-general as a sacrifice to his principles and friends, and who, if he had kept it, would have had a high law office, is sacrificed to Scarlett, who is a whig, and who has been in violent opposition to all the administrations of which I have been a member.' The sop however now thrown to this political Cerberus, stifled all his barking against tory corruptions; into which he soon plunged with the desperate energies of a renegade.

sultan's firm resolution to prevent that irreparable breach in his European dominion which the acknowledgement of Grecian independence would produce; so that the only option left to mediating powers, was that of desisting from their project, or supporting it by an armed force: accordingly, on the reception in London of this Turkish note, the celebrated treaty of the sixth of July, 1827, was signed by the plenipotentiaries of Great Britain, France, and Russia. It contained only one stipulation that was not embodied in the protocol of St. Petersburg; namely, that the Greeks should become possessors of the landed property situated in their own islands and mainland, on the condition of indemnifying its Mussulman proprietors: an additional article provided, that if, within the term of one month, the Ottoman Porte did not accept their intervention, the high contracting powers would establish commercial relations with Greece, and order the admirals commanding their naval forces to impose an armistice on the belligerents. Instructions, drawn up by common consent, authorised those commanders to prevent the transmission of troops and supplies from Turkey or Egypt to Greece; but enjoined them studiously to avoid hostilities, unless the Turks should try to force a passage: at the same time, while despatches were sent to the ambassadors at Constantinople, and to the Greek government, colonel Caradoc set out on a mission to Alexandria, for the purpose of persuading the pasha to withdraw his Egyptian army. As it was arranged that a combined fleet should give effect to these resolutions, two line-of-battle ships were sent from this country to reinforce sir Edward Codrington, whose flag was hoisted on board the *Asia* of eighty-four guns: the French government sent into the same seas four ships of the line; and admiral Siniavin arrived at Spithead with a Russian squadron of eight sail of the line and eight frigates; but his force being out of proportion to that of England or France, half of it returned to Cronstadt, and rear admiral count Heyden carried the remainder to join the confederates.

History scarcely records a public act more generally applauded throughout the civilised world than the treaty of the sixth of July; but it was urged in vain by the christian ambassadors on the divan, as well as by the allied admirals on the Turkish commanders: the Reif Effendi would not deign to receive any such communication; and when a copy was left on his sofa, he pertinaciously refused to answer it, or to admit any explanations: the Russian minister now

proposed to starve the divan into compliance by a joint blockade of the Bosphorus and Hellespont; when the French minister stated the ready concurrence of his court: but lord Dudley, as if to show how feeble hands can mar the projects of combined wisdom and moderation, objected, on the part of England, to such a step, as too violent; and this objection led to the quick destruction of the Turkish navy: had Mr. Canning fortunately lived, he would no doubt have adapted his ulterior measures to the exigency of circumstances; and would probably have acquiesced in prince Lieven's suggestion, as the surest means of stifling the flames of war. In the mean time, the Turks could not comprehend what secret spell it was which linked France and England with that great northern power, to whose schemes of aggrandisement they had been constantly opposed; and thus, while three of the four cabinets were agitated with doubt and apprehension, they were suddenly startled in this state of suspense by ominous sounds proceeding from the bay of Navarino.

In that harbor, celebrated for one of the most remarkable incidents in ancient history, the Turkish and Egyptian fleets were blockaded by the combined squadrons of England, France, and Russia, under the chief command of sir Edward Codrington. The Greeks had readily accepted an armistice under the treaty; while Ibrahim Pasha not only refused its terms, but aggravated all those miseries of war which the unhappy country had experienced at his hands; burning whole villages, after he had massacred their inhabitants; and cutting down vineyards and olive-trees, in which the principal riches of the nation consisted: irritated by such conduct, the allied admirals determined to enforce the armistice on this marauder; but if they thought the presence even of their formidable armament calculated to produce submission from the Turks, they greatly mistook the character of that people. About noon, on the twentieth of October, the combined fleets prepared for action, without professing hostile intentions, and steered into the bay; the British squadron leading; the French, under admiral de Rigny, following it; and the Russians bringing up the rear. The Mahometans, who were on the alert, and had drawn up their flotilla in a crescent with springs on the cables, immediately made up their minds that the allies came to attack them; and the Capitana Bey observed to his colleagues—'The die is now cast: I told you the English would not be trifled with:' such being the disposition on both sides, a conflict was inevitable. With regard to the respective strength of

the antagonists, that of the allies amounted to twenty-six ships, carrying 1324 guns; and that of the Turks to seventy-nine ships of war, armed with 2240 guns, beside those in the formidable batteries on shore: but as the Mussulmen had only three two-deckers, and their opponents had ten sail of the line, the latter can hardly be said to have fought at a disadvantage. The fire commenced on the enemy's side; for when the British admiral despatched one of his pilots to the flag-ship of the Turkish commander, expressing an earnest desire to avoid all effusion of blood, the messenger was wantonly shot at, and killed; nor was it long before the same vessel fired also into the *Asia*, which promptly returned the compliment: the conflict then became general; and though at sea it would probably have been quickly decided, it now raged four hours, and was carried on with great obstinacy and slaughter. The English bore the brunt of the engagement, and sustained the greatest loss; the French nobly emulating their skill and valor; while the Russians, who had to contend against the batteries, displayed equal courage, though their fire was not so well directed: the first named had seventy-five killed, including captain Bathurst of the *Genoa*, and one hundred and ninety-seven wounded: the Russians had fifty-seven killed, and one hundred and thirty-seven wounded, the *Azoff*, bearing count Heyden's flag, losing more than any other single ship: of the French, forty-three were killed, and one hundred and seventeen wounded; making the sum total six hundred and twenty-six put *hors de combat*. The scene of wreck and devastation on the side of the Turks was such as had never been witnessed since the battle of Lepanto: of about one hundred and twenty men of war and transports, no less a number than sixty-two were burnt, sunk, or driven on shore; while it was computed that near six thousand men perished in the action: the allies took no prizes, and detained no prisoners; but they saved many Turkish sailors, swimming in the bay or floating on spars. Ibrahim Pasha, who was absent on a military excursion, returned in time to see the shattered and smoking remains of his fleet, as it was said, with a certain degree of complacency; for the catastrophe, afflicting as it might be to his father and the sultan, extricated him from the dilemma in which he was placed, between his sovereign's orders and the mandate of the three greatest European powers: when the battle was over, the admirals entered into a fresh correspondence with the Turkish commanders; and as it was agreed that hostilities should cease, the allied fleet quitted Navarino on the

twenty-fifth. Most of the ships were crippled; and while they went generally into their own ports to refit, de Rigny, proceeded to Smyrna in the Trident, in order to protect the Europeans settled at that place. The sultan received the news of this disaster without dismay or loss of temper, though he demanded reparation for what he called a flagrant violation of the law of nations; but with a remarkable approach to the usages of civilised society, he permitted the christian ambassadors to depart in safety, instead of sending them, as usual, to the Seven Towers: and this he did even though news arrived that colonel Fabvier, a French officer, and lord Cochrane, had landed on the isle of Scio, the scene of so many Turkish barbarities, and compelled the pacha with his troops to retire into the fortress: but he declared that intercourse with their respective courts must cease until the latter should give satisfaction for these wrongs, and abandon all further interference in the affairs of Greece.

Throughout a great part of christendom, the report of the victory at Navarino diffused joy and gladness: but in Great Britain, the feeling of exultation was confined to a minority; for the tories generally exclaimed against this aggression on the forces of an ancient ally, as a wanton act of perfidy, and as forwarding the designs of the Russian autocrat; while ministers, ashamed of having calculated so ill the consequences of their interference, appeared thunderstruck by an event for which they ought to have been prepared, afraid to take a manly line of defence, and uncertain what course to pursue. After virtually pronouncing an opinion on the victory, by rewarding the officers who had achieved it, they despatched admiral sir John Gore to the Mediterranean for the purpose of collecting information; and thus gave their opponents a handle for taunting them with inconsistency: before the question, however, could be debated in parliament, lord Goderich's miserable and disjointed administration had fallen to pieces.

When the houses assembled on the twenty-ninth of January, the principal topic in the speech delivered by royal commissioners was an allusion to the late naval conflict; and, for the first time, a British victory was characterised as 'an untoward event:' nor can it be denied that it was a case of some perplexity, and might have been still more so, had the Ottoman government possessed the power necessary to support its demands: even as it was, that influence became weakened which Great Britain had long enjoyed in Turkey, and which was so beneficial to her commercial interests: but the men

now in power hated Greece and her cause; nor were they so blinded, even by admiration of despotic principles, as not to perceive the advantages which might accrue to Russia, in her future projects, from the destruction of the Ottoman navy, and from that diminution of confidence which the sultan would henceforth feel toward his great western allies: but of all European states, none perceived more clearly or felt more deeply the progress of Russian interests than the court of Vienna: the designs of the autocrat on Poland, his successes in Persia and the regions about the great Caucasian chain, but more especially the patient, steady aim of conquest with which his race have ever regarded the Byzantine throne;—in short, the whole scheme of Russian policy was weighed in all its bearings by prince Metternich, and became the chief pivot on which Austrian diplomacy might be said to turn. United to Russia by the ties of a common interest, as far as war against continental freedom is concerned, Austria still viewed the increasing power and aggrandisement of her mighty neighbor with extreme apprehension; and schemes for counteracting the ambitious projects of Pozzo di Borgo unceasingly occupied the penetrating and sagacious mind of Metternich. To events arising from this source of danger, as it regards the Austrian empire, Italy may perhaps look for the future recovery of her freedom; since the Italian provinces are to Austria what Ireland is to Great Britain. But on what shall Austria herself, and the other German states, rely for protection against the leviathan of the north? On what, but the friendship and firm coalition of Great Britain and France? What other combination, humanly speaking, would avail to preserve the balance of European power, threatened in that direction?

In both houses of parliament, the language held by the royal commissioners regarding the victory of Navarino was loudly denounced by opposition, as indicating intentions on the part of the Wellington cabinet to abandon the line of Mr. Canning's policy: but the usual addresses to the throne were carried without a division. The formation of the new ministry did not escape discussion; and on this occasion, Mr. Brougham, alluding to the unusual phenomenon of a military premier, made use of an expressive phrase, which has penetrated to every region where the English language is spoken. 'No man,' said the learned gentleman, 'values more highly than I do the services and genius of the noble duke as a soldier; but I do not like to see him at the head of the financial department of this country, with the full confidence

of his sovereign, enjoying all the patronage of the army, church, and state; while he is also entrusted with the delicate function of conveying constant and confidential advice to his royal master: this condition of affairs strikes me as being very unconstitutional. I am indeed told, that the noble duke is a person of great vigor in council; and that his talents are not confined to the art of war: it may be so; but that does not remove my objections to his possession of so immense a mass of civil and military patronage. It is said, that the noble duke is incapable of speaking in public as a first minister of the crown ought to speak: now I conceive that there is no validity in that objection; for I happened to be present, when the noble duke, last year, had the modesty and candor to declare, in another place, his unfitness for the situation of first minister; and I really thought I never heard a better speech in my life, or observed less want of capacity in any one who might be called on to take part in a debate: this therefore is not a reason with me for objecting to the appointment: my objection rests on the unconstitutional grounds which I have before stated, and on the experience of the noble duke being wholly military. Let it not, however, be supposed that I am inclined to exaggerate: I have no fear of slavery being introduced into this country by the power of the sword: it would demand a stronger man even than the duke of Wellington to effect that object: the noble duke might take the army and the navy, the mitre and the great seal—I will make him a present of them all: let him come on with his whole force, sword in hand, against the constitution; the people will not only beat him by their energies, but laugh at his efforts. There have, indeed, been periods when the country heard with dismay that ‘the soldier was abroad;’ but such is not the case now: let the soldier be ever so much abroad in the present age, he can do nothing: another power has arisen; another person, less important, nay, even insignificant in the eyes of some persons, has produced this state of things—the *schoolmaster is abroad*; and I trust more to the schoolmaster armed with his primer, for upholding the liberties of this country, than I fear lest the soldier in full military array should destroy them.’ All this was fine rhetoric, and did no discredit to Mr. Brougham’s genius; nor can the liberties of our glorious constitution ever be watched too closely: but if there be a man covered with military glory, who has shown himself alive to the true liberties of his country, and to the preservation of its constitutional rights, that man is the duke of Wellington. We are

not engaged now in canvassing particular parts of his policy, foreign or domestic; but the manner in which he has descended from a station, more exalted than that of monarchs, to take his stand among the supporters of the British constitution, to reform many of its abuses, and to extend its privileges, will demand the admiration of all ages: it is an example which has rarely been surpassed, and it stands prominent for the imitation of future warriors.

Much time was subsequently wasted in personal explanations, and angry discussion on the circumstances which led to the dissolution of the late cabinet; when the conduct of Mr. Huskisson and his party, in holding office under the new ministry, met with severe animadversion: a circumstance, however, which personally concerned that gentleman, soon paved the way to his dismissal, and to the resignation of his friends: this occurred during an election at Liverpool, where the honorable secretary affirmed, in one of his speeches, that he had obtained guarantees from the duke of Wellington before he joined his administration. On the appearance of this assertion in the public papers, the duke instantly took fire, and contradicted it with indignant and contemptuous vehemence, in the house of lords; asking what right Mr. Huskisson had to set himself up above any other member of the cabinet? The rebuke was met by that gentleman with a pitiful submission; his explanation of the meaning which he assigned to the word guarantee,—that of securing the co-operation of his friends, the earl of Dudley, lord Palmerston, and Mr. C. Grant in the cabinet,—was accepted; and there the affair rested for the present.

While these explanations were going on, that committee of finance, which had been so disastrous to the late administration, was appointed, on the motion of Mr. Peel, now the acknowledged leader of the commons: he introduced it with an able and comprehensive statement; whence it appeared, that a reduction of £48,608,000 had taken place in the funded and unfunded debt since 1815; while the actual sum of unredeemed debt amounted to £777,476,000: this being the total encumbrance, Mr. Peel next looked at the revenue and expenditure; and after going through their various items, he stated the income of last year at £49,581,000; the expenditure having been £49,487,000; leaving an excess of income equal to £94,000. As to the expenditure of the present year, the estimates were not yet completed; but, without binding himself down to extreme accuracy, they would be less than those of

the preceding year by £1,168,260. After this general statement, he declared that his colleagues and himself would willingly listen to any suggestions of the committee, for the appointment of which he was about to move; and he took that opportunity of pressing one subject particularly on its notice—a simplification of the public accounts, in imitation of France and America: a plan for the attainment of such an object would confer a lasting obligation on the state. The motion passed without any opposition, except that of Mr. Hume; who, having taken great pains to prepare a statement of the different branches of inquiry, declared that their proper investigation by one committee would occupy a period of two or three years; in proof of which, he instanced the last appointed, which was called sir Charles Long's committee; and which had been occupied five years with the customs and excise only: the finance committee made thirteen or fourteen reports; yet not one of them referred to many departments, into which he contended inquiry ought to be made; such as the crown lands, the hereditary revenues, the civil list, the expenses of our law courts and colonies: he therefore suggested the appointment of ten or eleven committees of finance, and described the different subjects which deserved attention: this plan however of dividing labor received no countenance, except from Mr. Brougham, who thought it might be judiciously adopted to a certain extent, by the committee dividing itself into separate lists of seven members, if necessary: twenty-three persons were then named: their labors were multifarious and important; and among several suggestions for the national advantage, one of the first related to a discovery that the public was regularly losing large sums by the system on which government annuities had been granted. Mr. Herries had submitted to them a statement of the finances, which lord Althorp described as 'able, clear, and satisfactory;' whence it appeared that those annuities had been sold at a considerable loss: the evidence of this was found in certain calculations made by Mr. Finlaison, who was said to have communicated the fact to lord Bexley in 1819, and subsequently to lord Goderich; stating the rate of this loss to be £8000 a month, and to arise from a false calculation of the duration of life, as given in Dr. Price's tables: either these were originally inaccurate; or human life, in consequence of increased comforts, conveniences, and scientific aid, was extended to a longer period; and the truth of this statement soon appeared evident to the committee: nothing, however, could be done to alter those

annuities which had been sold ; though a bill was immediately brought in, to suspend the operation of the act under which they had been granted, until a more correct system should be arranged : in a report on the ordnance department, the abolition of the office of its lieutenant-general was recommended ; but this proposition did not obtain the assent of ministers. Mr. Canning's widow was now raised to the peerage ; and when the estimates of the year were presented, it was proposed to grant a pension of £3000 a year to his second son, as a provision for the family.⁶ The grant was confirmed by a large majority in the commons, though vehemently opposed by lord Althorp, sir Matthew Ridley, Messrs. Hume, Bankes, P. Thompson, D. W. Harvey, and others ; all of whom admitted the splendid talents of the late premier ; though some objected to the grant on the score of economy, and several on the ground of its not having been deserved : this opposition, however, was generally thought illiberal and unjust ; for Mr. Canning had spent, not only his life, but his fortune, in the public service. 'It should be known,' says an acute observer, 'in justice to those who hold the higher offices under the crown, that their salaries fall short of the expenses to which they are subjected, by the manners of our country, and a mischievous convention. Their gorgeous scale of living has the double effect of giving an example and impulse to extravagance through every department of the public service, and of securing (perhaps by design) to private wealth a monopoly of administration. A man vigilantly prudent might perhaps have lived within his income in Mr. Canning's situation ; and it is known that he had no prodigal or expensive tastes ; but it is also known that he had that utter carelessness of money, through which fortune is not less effectually dissipated.'⁷

Connected with financial arrangements, was a measure regarding the currency. The act of 1826 had prohibited the issue of any notes under five pounds in England ; but the small notes of Ireland and Scotland had been spared ; and it was now found that those of the latter country were getting into extensive circulation through the northern counties. As the object of parliament had been to substitute a metallic for a small paper currency, and on this account had restricted English bankers, it would have been both partial and inconsistent to have

⁶ The elder was engaged in the naval service of his country ; and his life, therefore, was not thought safe : indeed, no long time elapsed before he was accidentally drowned.

⁷ Wallace's History of George IV. vol. iii. p. 327.

allowed free circulation to the notes of Ireland or Scotland: a motion therefore was made to prohibit the introduction of small Scotch notes, to be enforced by a fine summarily levied: the bill was opposed by those who had been hostile to the measure of 1826, but was carried by large and increasing majorities in all its stages: during the discussion it was stated, that £22,000,000 of gold was at this time circulating, and £8,000,000 of silver; also that a large quantity of specie was kept in reserve.

The budget was opened by the new chancellor of the exchequer with a clearness and simplicity that disarmed opposition. After various statements, he declared, that the total ordinary revenue of the year 1828 might be estimated at £50,381,530; to which must be added £3,082,500, to be received from the trustees of military and naval pensions, together with miscellaneous payments of £438,000; making a grand total of £53,902,030: the expenditure would amount to the sum of £50,104,522, which, being deducted from the revenue, left a surplus of £3,797,508: from this, however, was to be taken the advances to public works £708,000; so that the clear surplus was only £3,088,708, instead of £5,000,000, to be applied as a sinking fund. To supply this deficiency by any increase of taxation, was generally acknowledged to be, under present circumstances, out of the question; so that it was agreed almost in silence to limit the sinking fund to the amount of such balance as might remain after the expenses of the year were liquidated.

One of the most important questions debated during the session was a new settlement of the corn laws: the act now introduced was constructed on a graduated principle of ascending and descending duties, like that of Mr. Canning; but the medium price, or pivot, which was before taken at sixty shillings, was raised by the duke of Wellington to sixty-four: even this compromise did not satisfy the agriculturists in either house, whilst it increased the objections which the advocates of a free trade in corn had raised against the previous bill. Mr. C. Grant, who introduced the measure in the house of commons, hardly attempted its vindication; but declared that it was the best that could be framed in the existing conflict of interests and opinions. In this contest agriculture was very improperly considered as opposed both in its nature and objects to manufactures; while, in fact, it is itself a manufacture, and the most advantageous of all manufactures; for its profits are certain, and its employment healthy: moreover, all grain

raised beyond the seed sown, adds the whole extent of such produce to the wealth, and the people employed in its production to the strength of the state. The grand object of every good government is to provide employment for industry; and the first point to be attended to in this respect is the manufacturing of the raw material produced by the country; for this is real wealth: hence agriculture must always prove the most useful kind of manufacture to every state. The fruits and productions of the soil, raised by labor and capital, are disseminated and divided among all classes, who exchange their labor for that of the agriculturist, until sustenance is obtained by all: it is this internal commerce which is so beneficial, and so important, from the rapidity of the exchange, and the stability of it, as far as every description of produce is consumed by the inhabitants of a country; and by no other means can manufacturers and tradesmen be so extensively injured as by an oppression of the agricultural interest. On the contrary, it is but fair to observe, that a large party in the country took a very different view of this subject; considering that protective and prohibitory duties were delusive to the agriculturist, who was thus taught to rely upon acts of parliament instead of depending on his own energy, skill, and capital; whilst they were particularly injurious to farming laborers, who are worse fed, worse clothed, worse housed, and worse educated than any other class in England. This party, looking to the harvests and the commerce of future years, to our vast increase of population, whose prospective industry would demand for its support extended markets; looking also to the high destinies of Great Britain and the mighty power of its industrial resources, felt that a time was approaching, when she must either succumb in the contest with rival nations, or triumph successful over all, and become the grand mart of the whole earth.

The measure of greatest public interest, however, carried at this time, was the repeal of the test and corporation acts. The grievances of the dissenters, whom those enactments were originally intended to exclude from offices of trust and power, had become almost nominal, through the act of indemnity which was annually passed to relieve such as were subject to penalties; but the very semblance of a political disqualification is always viewed by loyal subjects as a degradation, if not an injury; and as the progress of liberal opinions seemed favorable to the attempt, a bill to repeal those obsolete laws, and to substitute a declaration in place of the sacramental test, was brought into the house of commons by that great advocate of

civil and religious liberty, lord John Russell. Ministers were not blind to what would be the ulterior consequences of this measure, if successful; but it was useless to strive against the spirit of the age: after an abortive project of sir T. Acland for suspending instead of repealing the acts in question, as well as the rejection of Mr. Peel's proposition to take more time for consideration, lord John's motion was carried by a majority of 237 to 193, and against the influence of the cabinet; so that it became evident that its members must resign either their opinions or their places. They chose the former alternative: Mr. Peel said, he could not think of pressing his sentiments against those of the majority; government itself took up the measure; when it came into the house of lords under the protection of the premier, and was advocated with remarkable energy and talent by lord Holland: thus approved, it was generally supported by the spiritual peers, though strongly and consistently opposed as a revolutionary measure by the ex-chancellor Eldon, who declared that, much as he had heard of 'the march of mind,' he never expected to see it march into that house, with the duke of Wellington and the bishops at its head.⁸ After some vain attempts in committee to narrow the principle of this bill, it passed through all its stages, and finally received the royal assent.⁹

The necessity of repealing these laws, as a consequence of granting the claims of Romanists, had been strenuously maintained and deprecated by the determined opponents of the latter measure: it was therefore with utter dismay that they saw the former carried, anticipating, as they did, its probable effects on the subject of catholic emancipation: nor was it long before that harassing question was again brought forward, with increased weight, by sir Francis Burdett, whose motion for a

⁸ In a letter to his daughter, unmindful of the advance of intellect or reason, and anticipating nothing but ruin from a measure which has tended wonderfully to mollify the spirit of dissent, the worthy old gentleman says, 'the administration have, to their shame be it said, got the archbishops and most of the bishops to support this revolutionary bill. I voted as long ago as the year 1787, 1789, and 1790 against a similar measure; lord North and Pitt opposing it as destructive of the church establishment.'—Life, vol. iii. p. 37.

⁹ 'The amendments,' says lord Eldon, 'that were carried in the house of lords were poor things—all that were good and necessary for the maintenance of church and state were negatived: so that the bill is, in my poor judgment, as *bad*, as *mischievous*, and as *revolutionary* as the most captious dissenter would wish it to be.'—Life, vol. iii. p. 45.

committee was carried by a majority of six: its deliberations, however, went no farther than to 'the expediency of considering the laws affecting Roman catholics, with a view to such an adjustment, as might conduce to the peace and strength of the empire, and to the stability of the established church.' Instead of forming resolutions in detail, it was determined to seek a conference with the lords, in order to ascertain whether their sentiments on the subject had undergone any change; this proposal was accepted, and the conference held on the nineteenth of May; when the resolution of the commons, after being read in the upper house, was ordered to be taken into consideration on the ninth of June. The debate lasted two days; but the proposition of the marquis of Lansdowne, 'that their lordships should concur in that resolution,' being strenuously opposed by Wellington, and the law lords Eldon, Colchester, Redesdale, and Manners, as well as by the bench of bishops, was lost by a majority of forty-four.

Early in this session, Mr. Brougham had directed attention to the state of our common law and its courts, in a speech which occupied six hours, and was remarkable for its variety of details: but though most men concurred in the opinion, that no subject was more worthy of attention than the improvement of our law; yet the unbounded extent of Mr. Brougham's inquiry, in which the attorney and solicitor-general pointed out several fallacies and errors, seemed to preclude the possibility of effecting any good: in addition to this, it may be observed, that there is always found an antipathy in one party to what is proposed by the other: two commissions, however, issued; one to inquire into the state of the common law, and the other to take into consideration the law of real property.

At the opening of this session, lord Londonderry, in his ardent admiration of the military premier, had announced the determination with which that premier would 'cut off the unsound parts of his government, if it should be attacked with the dry rot;' nor did a long period elapse before this prediction was verified. In the course of the session, bills were introduced into parliament, to disfranchise the corrupt boroughs of Penryn and East Retford: Penryn first engaged the attention of the commons; a bill transferring its elective privileges to Manchester, being sent up to the house of lords; while the case of East Retford was allowed to stand over, since the decision of the commons respecting it might be materially affected by that of the peers on the former question. On the nineteenth of May, when the East Retford bill was again

moved, there seemed to be so great a certainty that the Penryn bill would be rejected by the lords, that ministers, who had pledged themselves, only in case of two boroughs being thrown on their hands, to give the elective franchise to a town, considered themselves in fact as having but one borough to deal with: accordingly, all, with one exception, voted against transferring its privileges to Birmingham; favoring the claims of the adjoining hundred, though not without exciting strong suspicions of patronising 'a job,' for the benefit of a great borough proprietor. Mr. Huskisson, who had declared that he would vote, at all events, for the transfer to Birmingham, felt himself bound to redeem his pledge, and to divide against his colleagues: this, no doubt, was an awkward occurrence; but as the intentions of government were somewhat obscure, few persons would have thought it important enough to affect his connexion with the administration: Mr. Huskisson himself however, in general a sound and sagacious politician, took a different view of the subject; and coming home from the house of commons about two o'clock in the morning, he addressed a letter to the duke of Wellington, marked 'private and confidential;' in which he said, his duty led him, 'without loss of time, to afford his grace an opportunity of placing his office in other hands:' the duke received this communication about ten; and without loss of time availed himself of the opportunity thus offered, by laying Mr. Huskisson's letter, as a resignation, before his majesty. For such prompt, straightforward conduct that gentleman was not prepared; and disappointed perhaps that his services were not solicited by the minister, he declared to lord Dudley, with whom he happened to be in conversation when his grace's answer arrived, that he had never intended to resign; and his letter was marked 'private:' in consequence, lord Dudley immediately waited on the premier, and attempted to pass the matter off as a mistake; but his grace maintained that it was to all intents and purposes a resignation; declaring, emphatically, 'it is no mistake; it can be no mistake; it shall be no mistake.' Mr. Huskisson had the weakness, after this decided repulse, to offer explanations through lord Palmerston; but without any better success: he then, with almost incredible pertinacity, addressed a written appeal to the duke, which led to a correspondence, and to the humiliating failure which he deserved. The premier was in fact glad of an occasion to relieve himself from a colleague with whom he had several causes of pique, and with whose political principles his own did not wholly coincide: he was

therefore inexorable; and the dismissal of Mr. Huskisson was followed by the resignation of lords Dudley and Palmerston, as well as of Mr. Charles Grant. Their places in the cabinet were supplied by sir George Murray, who succeeded Mr. Huskisson; sir Henry Hardinge, who was made secretary at war; and Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, who took Mr. Charles Grant's place at the board of trade; while the seals of the foreign secretary were committed to that determined enemy of continental freedom, the earl of Aberdeen. It is not meant to deny that this nobleman's views may be directed to advance what he considers the political interests of his own country; but the Castlereagh school never produced a British statesman more indifferent to the oppression which any nation may undergo from the tyranny of despotic power. When, alas! will the period arrive, in which we shall see the cause of humanity inseparably connected with the policy of christian governments? when shall we see potentates and statesmen uniting to repress injustice, and to establish peace among men?

No farther change took place in our administration during the year, except that the duke of Clarence, from some disagreement with the premier, connected with the promotion of naval officers, and the large expenses incurred by his royal highness in costly journeys and marine exhibitions, resigned his post of lord high admiral; when a board was appointed on the old system, with lord Melville at its head; to the general dissatisfaction of the naval and military professions. In Ireland, a change of government became necessary toward the close of this year. Parliament was prorogued on the twenty-eighth of July; when two interesting subjects of foreign policy were introduced into the speech of the commissioners;—war between Russia and Turkey—and the suspension of our relations with Portugal. It may reasonably be supposed, from the character of Mr. Canning's policy, that the victory of Navarino, in his hands, would have had the effect of softening the barbarian councils of Turkey, by the only argument which its savage rulers comprehend; while his fearless energy, and his connexion with the liberal and enlightened portion of Europe, would have controlled the ambition of Russia. It is certain, that no statesman ever occasioned greater trouble and apprehension to that power; nor could any one take a more effectual method to thwart its views, than by placing Great Britain in a position to hold the balance in a struggle of political interests and opinions: but the duke of Wellington paralysed every effect of victory, and encouraged Turkish obstinacy, by what may be

called an apologetic course of proceeding ; while his foreign policy in general had neither the influence nor energy necessary to keep down Russian pretensions : so that Nicholas, detaching himself from the treaty of London, soon declared war against the Porte on his own account, for objects which were said to be wholly national.¹⁰

In Portugal affairs had taken a turn still more strange : the infatuated Don Pedro, supposing that a few months of foreign travel, together with a short residence in a German court, could erase the characters of malignant cruelty and perfidy inherent in his brother's disposition, named him regent of the kingdom ; but not before Miguel had spontaneously sworn allegiance to him, as natural sovereign, as well as to the constitutional charter ; and had also engaged on oath to deliver up the crown to Donna Maria II., as soon as that princess should be legally intitled to it. Under such circumstances, he quitted Vienna ; and on his way to Lisbon, spent several weeks in England, where he met with a very distinguished reception ; being abundantly caressed, not only by that small party in this country who had an object in disturbing the affairs of Portugal, but by all the members of government, and the aristocracy in general. During his sojourn in London, he resided at the house of earl Dudley in Arlington-street, which was assigned for his accommodation ; and there he held several levees, giving audiences to foreign ambassadors and ministers : he was twice sumptuously entertained at the admiralty by the duke of Clarence ; and, after visiting the king at Windsor, he proceeded to Plymouth, where he embarked, on the 20th of January, in a Portuguese frigate. At his departure, this accomplished pet,¹¹ who was viewed with some suspicion, addressed a letter to the king, declaring that if, on his return to Portugal, he attempted any thing against the rights of his brother or niece, or against the constitution, '*he should be an usurper, and a perjured wretch ;*' which character was scarcely drawn by his pen, before he hastened to assume it. On his arrival at Lisbon, his mother, a monster possessed by an innate and insane thirst of blood, resumed her influence over him ; and after a series of intrigues and atrocities, the Cortes were

¹⁰ The chief pretext for the Russian declaration of war was the imperious behaviour of the Porte, in its delay to fulfil the treaty of Ackerman.

¹¹ His common amusement, before he took to the killing of men, was to ride through the streets of Lisbon, armed with an iron rod, with which he killed the dogs that abound in that noisome city.

dismissed, the charter was abolished, and Don Miguel proclaimed absolute king. Immediately, all the dungeons in the realm were filled with victims; thousands, who preserved their loyalty, and acknowledged the sanctity of an oath, ended their days in those loathsome dens, or perished on the scaffold; while immense numbers were banished to the desert coasts of Africa, or voluntarily abandoned their country, to endure all the sorrows of unmerited exile. Had Mr. Canning lived, this desperate assassin, who even attempted the life of his sister, would assuredly not have been sent back without some humane restrictions placed on his savage propensities: but the duke of Wellington was content to restore him on his bare *parole*; and lord Aberdeen thought that the insult which he had committed against the majesty of the British nation, his act of usurpation, and his abolition of the chartered liberties of his country, were all sufficiently avenged by the suspension of our diplomatic relations with Portugal: Don Pedro, by his ministers at Vienna and London, entered solemn protests against the violation of his hereditary rights and those of his daughter, whom he had despatched with a royal *cortége* to Europe. Her destination, in the first instance, was Vienna; but, on touching at Gibraltar, and learning the events which had occurred in Portugal, she took counsel with the principal officers in her suite, and by their advice directed her course to England; there, however, as she was much less acceptable to our tory ministers, she received much less notice than her uncle Miguel had obtained: yet the rights of this young princess to her throne were incontestable on every principle of legitimacy, had been admitted by the Portuguese nation, recognized by the European courts, and repeatedly sworn to by the wretch who now usurped them. With regard to George IV. at this period, he appeared almost as insensible to the dignity, as averse to the fatigues of royalty: he rarely met his parliament, or held a court; but, secluding himself totally from the view of his subjects, endeavored to banish politics from his thoughts, and to ward off ministerial changes, which might interfere with his ease or his voluptuous amusements: events, however, were nigh at hand, which, by threatening to disturb his tranquillity, occasioned the greatest revulsion which had yet taken place in his political principles.

No sooner had the present ministers assumed the reins of government, than Irish agitation, which gratitude or prudence had partially suppressed during the two previous administrations, instantly revived in all its force; for Wellington had

ever been one of the most energetic opponents of catholic claims ; and Peel was considered as representing the embodied resistance of the high church and tory party of England. In these two leaders, every protestant of the empire, averse to emancipation, firmly confided : accordingly, against them and their government the agitators raised a cry of war, while they proceeded to reorganise the catholic association : their efforts were openly seconded by the popish priesthood ; and the first display of this united power, to use the expression of Mr. Sheil, 'made the great captain start.' It was exhibited in a contested election for the county of Clare, when Mr O'Connell adopted the novel experiment of offering himself, though a catholic, as a candidate for the representation ; broaching a new, but unfounded opinion, that even under the existing law he was not precluded from sitting in the house of commons ; and pledging himself, if he should be returned, to make the experiment. In this instance, although the protestant candidate, Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, was an advocate for emancipation, his speeches were considered only as a mockery, while the government to which he belonged was based on the principle of exclusion ; and though he was supported by the great mass of landed proprietors and moderate men of all parties, yet the peasantry were impelled by their priests to vote for the grand agitator ; who, in face of a protest, was declared duly returned, and who promised to demand his seat in the ensuing session.

This proof of catholic determination and power was only a prelude to farther manifestations of both : the association, when the restraining act expired, was reorganised on its old construction ; and the name of agitators applied to its leaders as a term of reproach and contumely, was accepted by the whole body as a title of honor. A plan was now formed and executed, with the aid and agency of the priests, to break that link which united the catholic forty-shilling freeholders with their landlords : certain tests were framed, and resolutions adopted, to reject every candidate who should decline a pledge to oppose Wellington's administration, and to vote for parliamentary reform, as well as for a repeal of the sub-letting act : and while the peasantry, at the command of their masters, ceased, as it were mechanically, from habitual outrage and lawless violence, they assembled in large companies, regularly trained for the exertion of physical force, and anxious for its display whenever it might be required. The state of Ireland at this period was vividly, yet faithfully delineated, in the following description, given by one of her most eloquent sons :

—‘Does not a tremendous organisation,’ said Mr. Sheil, ‘extend over the whole island? have not all the natural bonds, by which men are tied together, been broken and burst asunder? are not all the relations of society, which exist elsewhere, gone? has not property lost its influence? has not rank been stripped of the respect which should belong to it? and has not an internal government grown up, which, gradually superseding the legitimate authorities, has armed itself with a complete domination? Is it nothing, that the whole body of catholic clergy are alienated from the state; and that the catholic gentry, peasantry, and priesthood, are all combined in one vast confederacy? So much for catholic indignation while we are at peace; and when England shall be involved in war—I pause: it is not necessary that I should discuss that branch of the division, or point to the cloud, which, charged with thunder, is hanging over our heads.’

As the year advanced, the state of the country assumed a new and still more fearful aspect; for the protestants, becoming irritated by virulent language of the principal agitators, alarmed at the menacing attitude of their followers, and disgusted by the apparent apathy of the British government, began to unite in self-defence: provincial Orange lodges were now re-opened, with the grand lodge in Dublin as the centre of operations; while new associations, under the title of Brunswick clubs, including in their lists the most influential classes, contributed to break up society into parties, for the more extended indulgence of mutual animosity: the protestant clubs had an extensive sway throughout the northern counties, as the catholic association was dominant in those of the south: to the former, therefore, where the organisation of the Romanists proceeded more slowly, an apostle of agitation was sent, in the person of Mr. Lawless: that itinerant orator, traversing the different districts from parish to parish, not only collected together the catholics in their chapels, where he inflamed them by every possible incentive, but entered the towns at the head of immense multitudes; until at length the protestants also came out to prevent his progress, and serious riots took place: then the association, beginning to fear that it had gone too far, by exciting in one part of the country a spirit difficult to be controlled, and creating in another successful opposition, instead of that silence which is produced by dismay, issued a proclamation, exhorting the peasants to desist from meeting in large bodies; and the ominous obedience shown to this mandate left nothing for a subsequent proclamation of the lord lieutenant to

effect: the assemblies had disappeared before he ventured to call them in question. Amid this fearful state of illegal organisation and impending anarchy, the only remarkable declaration which ministers substituted for active measures, consisted in a private letter sent by the duke of Wellington to Dr. Curtis, catholic primate of Ireland; in which, while he expressed great anxiety to witness the settlement of the question, and confessed that he saw no prospect of such a consummation, he observed, with a kind of studied obscurity, 'if we could bury it in oblivion for a short time, I should not despair of a satisfactory result.' Dr. Curtis having communicated this enigmatical epistle to the lord lieutenant, the opinion pronounced by his excellency was decidedly of an opposite nature. 'I differ,' said he, 'from the duke, with respect to burying the question for a short time in oblivion;—first, because the thing is utterly impossible; and next, if it were possible, I fear advantage might be taken of the pause, by representing it as a panic achieved by the late violent re-action; and by proclaiming, that if government peremptorily decided against concession, the catholics would cease to agitate: then all the miseries of Ireland would be re-acted. I therefore recommend that the measure should not for a moment be lost sight of; that anxiety should continue to be manifested; that all constitutional means should be adopted to forward the cause, consistent with patient forbearance and submissive obedience to the laws; that the catholics should trust to the justice of that cause, and to the growing liberality of mankind; but should not desist from *agitation*.' For this advice, which was afterwards made public with the lord lieutenant's consent, he is said to have been recalled in displeasure by the premier: but dates, together with subsequent explanations and events, seem to indicate other motives for this determination; and lord Anglesey himself is reported to have divined the true reason of his dismissal. 'I know the duke,' he said; 'his mind is made up to emancipate the catholics; and I am recalled, because he would have no one to share his victory:' at all events, the latter part of the old year was employed by administration in testifying their repugnance to a measure which it was their first act in the new year to introduce.

On the fourth of December, the earl of Liverpool expired at Combe Wood, after various fluctuations in his health; though not the slightest prospect of recovery had appeared since his first attack. Seldom has it happened, that a minister, undistinguished by great brilliancy of genius or parliamentary

eloquence, acquired so much weight, or conciliated so much favor, by the mere force of personal character: he possessed indeed a sound and cautious judgment, with a mind well adapted to business, and stored with that political knowledge which is requisite for a statesman; but it was in his unquestionable integrity, his open and manly conduct, his honest and prudent resolves, that the country chiefly trusted; for he was never suspected of governing merely to serve party purposes, of speaking for the pleasure of victory, or of intriguing for the acquisition of power. One trait in his character deserves peculiar notice: in his distribution of ecclesiastical patronage, and careful selection of those whom he raised to offices of dignity and responsibility in the church, he put to shame all his predecessors, and set a splendid example to future ministers; showing, what few seem ever to have suspected, that more influence is to be gained by one single appointment made from pure, disinterested motives, than by fifty pieces of preferment lavished on parliamentary retainers, or those whose only claims are the ties of kindred and affinity.

The judicial annals of this year were marked by a case so unparalleled in atrocity, that the criminal has obtained an unusual, though unenviable distinction, of introducing a new verb into our vocabulary. An Irishman, of the name of Burke, cohabiting with a female named Helen M'Dougal, coalesced with one Hare, who let lodgings for low travellers in the city of Edinburgh, to murder persons by wholesale, and dispose of their bodies to the teachers of anatomy. In that den of iniquity, according to the confession of the principal actor, sixteen persons, some in their sleep, others after intoxication, and several in a state of infirmity from disease, were suffocated by these demons in the human shape; one of the men generally throwing himself on the victim to hold him down, while the other, 'burked' him, by forcibly compressing the nostrils and mouth, or the throat, with his hands. Hare being admitted as king's evidence, Burke and his other partner in guilt were arraigned on three counts; charging them with the murder of an unfortunate girl of the town, named Patterson; of a poor idiot, known by the appellation of daft Jamie; and of an elderly woman, named Docherty; on the last of which Burke was found guilty; while the woman, Helen M'Dougal, was acquitted. The murderer was convicted on the twenty-fourth of December; but as the law of Scotland humanely allowed a longer space of time to elapse between conviction and execution than that of England, he did not suffer till the twenty-

eighth of January ensuing : nevertheless, popular indignation did not abate ; and when the monster was brought out to undergo his sentence, the shouts and execrations of the crowd which surrounded the gallows, and filled the neighboring streets, were quite appalling.

On the first of October this year, the London University was opened by the celebrated Charles Bell, professor of physiology and surgery, who delivered the first lecture of the courses dedicated to medical science ; and on the twenty-fifth of the same month, a circumstance of great interest to the mercantile world took place in the opening of St. Katharine's Docks, below the Tower, with much pomp, and a large assemblage of spectators : the vessels which entered those spacious receptacles, amid the discharges of artillery and the shouts of assembled multitudes, had their yards manned, and their rigging ornamented with the flags of all European nations, as well as other devices. The amount of capital, raised by shares, for this great undertaking, was £1,352,800 ; but the whole expense to its final completion was calculated at about £1,700,000 : in clearing the ground, 1250 houses or tenements were pulled down ; no less than 11,300 inhabitants having to seek accommodation elsewhere. The area thus obtained is about twenty-four acres ; of which eleven and a half are devoted to wet docks : the canal leading to them from the river is 190 feet long, and forty-five feet broad ; sunk to such a depth, that ships of 700 tons burden may enter at any time of the tide : the first stone was laid on the third of May, 1827 ; and more than 2500 men were daily employed.

The only foreign politics that require additional comment are those of France and Greece. The ministry of M. de Villèle had fallen last year, because its members lent themselves to the designs of the court and priesthood, instead of consulting the growing spirit and intelligence of the nation ; nor could several good measures which they had carried, or the royal favor, on account of which they had attempted and executed many bad, support them against a general impression, that neither civil nor religious liberty was safe in their hands. At the head of the new ministers, forced on the court by the liberal party, was M. Roy, a gentleman possessing considerable knowledge of finance ; but the cabinet was composed of men, moderate both in talent and opinions ; and was tolerated by the king only as a necessary evil, though it contained much more of the materials of the old ministry than was agreeable to the party which raised it to power. The priests and jesuits

were now striving in France for the absolute control of public education, as the most effectual means of recovering their power; while a seasonable jealousy of these attempts, and an ardent determination to resist them, was widely diffused; so that 'no jesuitism' became as awakening a cry in France, as 'no popery' used to be in Great Britain: the new ministers, therefore, in their first acts, endeavored to allay the fears of the nation on these points; and in so doing, alienated from themselves still more the good will of the monarch. In his majesty's speech to the chambers, he took a different view from our cabinet of the transaction at Navarino; and after observing that the exertions of Ferdinand in Spain, to stifle the germs of civil discord, promised soon to restore the French army of occupation to its native land, he declared, that the rigorous blockade of Algiers, instituted on account of the insults and aggression of that state against French commerce, should not terminate until complete satisfaction was obtained.

In the autumn of this year, the French government sent a strong military force to the Morea, under general Maison; who, while the oppressor and the insidious patron of Greece were engaged in mortal conflict, expelled the cruel Ibrahim from a country which he had desolated, and reduced the Turkish fortresses of the Morea, which were obstinately defended by their garrisons: before the end of November, the ancient Peloponnesus, freed from foreign control, was left to the direction of its provisional government; at the head of which the count Capo d'Istria had been installed as president. In his inaugural address, he told his countrymen that its first care should be to repress insubordination, deliver them from anarchy, and conduct them by degrees to national and political regeneration: he also set himself sternly against the piratical habits by which independent Greece had disgraced herself; and he had sufficient authority to make the fleet, which was placed at his disposal, carry his orders into effect: as yet, neither he nor the government had enjoyed leisure to frame any system of finance; but he had obtained a loan from Russia, and looked forward confidently to the assistance of England and France. Under present circumstances, however, the most important subject was that relating to the boundaries of the new kingdom; and although this was a question which the allied powers, parties to the treaty of London, would have to settle with the Ottoman Porte, the commission of the national assembly addressed a declaration to those powers; in which it was proposed, that the northern mountains of

Thessaly, and the course of the river Voiussa, should form its boundary on the north, to the exclusion of Macedonia: these limits, as they justly observed, seemed to be pointed out by Nature herself; and where boundaries do not coincide with some great natural features, but are lines arbitrarily laid down, they actually tempt an usurper by that dangerous facility which they offer to violation: these considerations, however, were ultimately lost sight of. If any result was desirable for western Europe from the independence of Greece, it was the creation of a strong barrier against the encroachments of the northern leviathan, after the partition of Poland; and if Russian influence over the new state was feared, that influence would be more easily exerted over a small than over a large territory; which latter might easily preserve its liberty with the aid of external alliances: but the spirit of our tory government seemed adverse to the independence of any nation, except its own; and though there were considerations that especially recommended the interests of Greece to so admirable a scholar as our secretary for foreign affairs, no sentiment appeared able to conquer his rooted antipathy to the general cause of freedom.

CHAPTER LXVI.

GEORGE IV. (CONTINUED.)—1829.

Agitations in Ireland—Election of Mr. O'Connell for Clare—Difficulties of the cabinet—Determination of the government to concede the catholic claims—Opening of parliament—Suppression of the catholic association—Rejection of Mr. Peel at Oxford—Debates and passing of the emancipation bill—Disfranchisement of the Irish forty-shilling freeholders—Financial statements—Motion for parliamentary reform—Prorogation of parliament—Affairs of the continent—Agricultural and commercial distress—State of affairs in Ireland—Conflagration of York Minster—Opening of new Fleet market and Post-office—New police—Meeting of parliament in 1830—Distress of the nation denied by ministers—Speeches, &c., on occasion of the address—Motions for inquiry, &c.—Debates on reductions and taxation, &c.—Committee on East Indian company's charter—Debate on the currency—The budget—Beer bill—Reform of parliament—Debates on subjects connected with it—Bill for amending the law of libel—Alterations in courts of justice—Illness of the king—Bill to authorise a stamp for the sign manual—Death of George IV.

IN Ireland the recommendation of the late lord-lieutenant was strictly followed; and when his successor, the duke of Northumberland, arrived in Dublin, he found agitation pervading the whole country: Brunswick clubs, despairing of any effectual aid from government, were beginning to buckle on their armor, and take the field against the new order of liberators; while the denunciations of both parties, breathing defiance and revenge, augured nothing less than the horrors of civil war. The situation of the prime minister now became one of great and peculiar difficulty: the whole tenor of his political life, as well as that of his principal supporters, had been marked by hostility to the catholic claims; every individual having distinctly pledged himself to resist them; grounding his declarations, not on circumstances which might change, but on the nature of the Romish church, which abhors the very notion of change: if the duke therefore saw reason to alter his own opinions, he would naturally find much

difficulty in producing a similar change in those of honorable, disinterested, independent members of the legislature; nor would he find the sovereign more tractable; since his reluctance to yield on this point was deep-rooted and vehement: it is well known, that to obtain his majesty's consent cost the premier months of management, vigilance, and perseverance; and probably nothing but that indolence and love of ease, which a dissolution of the ministry would have interrupted, overcame the repugnance he had ever manifested to entertain this question; in the meantime, O'Connell's election for Clare, the disturbances which afflicted Ireland, the efforts of a large party in England, and the delay of public business, which a continual agitation of this subject in parliament occasioned, made it necessary for his grace to decide on some mode of action. His choice was threefold; either to fall back on old tory principles, and take his ground, as at Waterloo, with a determination never to yield—or to grant emancipation with a free and liberal hand—or, lastly, to retire from the helm of state for a season, and permit a whig government to carry the measure. It may be truly alleged, that to put off concession much longer, without drawing the sword and re-conquering Ireland, was impossible; and even how such a conquest could be obtained against an increasing majority in the house of commons, with more than a third of the nation favorable to emancipation, and another third tired of the subject, or insensible to its result, is very difficult to conceive: there can be little doubt, however, that the latter course would have been at once the wisest and most honorable; for it was hardly fair to steal the crown of victory from those statesmen, who, during the whole of their political career, had ably and eloquently advocated the catholic cause; nor was it prudent in his grace to subject his own party not only to imputations and aspersions, but ultimately to disunion, by the course which he pursued.

Having determined, however, to carry the question by his own might, he first gave intimation of this intention in the king's speech, delivered by commission on the fifth of February: the suppression of the catholic association was there alluded to as a measure which ought to precede any review of the condition of Ireland, or any consideration of the disabilities under which Roman catholics were laboring. The advocates of exclusion, perceiving at once the tendency of this recommendation, complained of treacherous desertion and surprise, charging the duke with a perfidious concealment of his

designs up to the last moment; while they loaded Mr. Peel and Mr. Goulburn, men distinguished as Irish secretaries by their anti-catholic sentiments, with the most bitter execrations, on account of their supposed apostacy. On the tenth, a bill was introduced by the former of these gentlemen, to augment the powers of government, for the purpose of suppressing the association; and this passed without opposition; for although its provisions were somewhat arbitrary in their nature, the friends of the Romanists voted in favor of it, as part of a measure intended to terminate in emancipation: the association, however, rendered all such enactments unnecessary, by announcing its own dissolution before the bill was complete. On the fifth of March, for which day a call of the house of commons had been ordered, Mr. Peel moved that they should go into committee respecting the laws which imposed disabilities on the Roman catholics; but he no longer rose as member for the university of Oxford: that station, from which Mr. Canning had been rejected, Mr. Peel had reached and retained by his uncompromising hostility to the catholic claims: actuated therefore by the most honorable feelings, he resigned his trust into the hands of those from whom he had received it, before he advocated a measure which they conscientiously abhorred: the only matter of surprise is, that he should have incurred the mortification of certain defeat, by consenting to be put in nomination, with a view to re-election, by a small party of his adherents.

Mr. Peel began by stating, that he rose, as one of the king's ministers, to vindicate the advice which a united cabinet had given to his majesty, and submit to the house measures for carrying such recommendation into effect: he was aware of the difficulties with which the subject was surrounded, increased as they were by the relation in which he himself stood to the question; but having come to the sincere conviction, that the time had arrived when an amicable adjustment of the disputed claims would be accompanied with less danger than any other course that could be suggested, he was prepared to act on that conviction; unchanged by any expression of contrary sentiments, however general or deep; unchanged by the forfeiture of political confidence, or by the heavy loss of private friendship. He had long felt, that with a house of commons favorable to catholic emancipation, his position as a minister opposed to it, was untenable; and he had more than once intimated his desire to resign office, and thus remove one obstacle to a settlement of the question: he had done so on

the present occasion; though at the same time he notified to the duke of Wellington, that, seeing how the current of public opinion lay, he was ready to sacrifice consistency or private friendship, and to support the measure, provided it were undertaken on principles from which no danger to the protestant establishment need be apprehended: he was aware that he was expected to make out a case for this change of policy; and he was now about to submit to the house a statement, which proved to his own mind, with the force of demonstration, that ministers were imperatively called on to recommend the measure, however inconsistent it might appear with their former tenets.

The argument, by which this case was to be made out, said Mr. Peel, resolved itself into the following propositions: first, matters could not remain in their present state; the evil of divided councils being so great, that something must be done, and a government must be formed with a common opinion on the subject: secondly, a united government once constituted must do one of two things; it must either grant farther political rights to the catholics, or recall those which they already possess: but thirdly, to deprive them of what they already have, would be impossible; or, at least, would be infinitely more mischievous than to grant them more; and therefore no case remained to be adopted, except that of concession.

Having illustrated these propositions at great length, and with great ability, Mr. Peel proceeded to develop the course which it was intended to pursue. The principle or basis of the projected measures was the abolition of civil distinctions, and the establishment of equal political rights; with a few special exceptions: the chief of these were the continued disqualification of Roman catholics from holding the offices of lord chancellor, or keeper of the great seal, or lord lieutenant of Ireland; from receiving any appointments in protestant universities or colleges; and from exercising any right of presentation, as lay patrons, to the benefices and dignities of the church of England: an oath also was to be exacted from all who should become members of parliament, civil officers of state, or members of corporations, by which they were to promise allegiance to the crown, as well as to abjure every design of subverting the protestant establishment in church and state. To these indispensable provisions some others less important were added; such as prohibitions against carrying the insignia of office to places of Roman catholic worship; and against the assumption, by

prelates of that communion, of the same episcopal titles as those which belong to the church of England: also certain precautions against the increase of monastic institutions, particularly that of the jesuits, intended chiefly to allay the alarm still existing in some minds against that once formidable order: a more effective and important check, however, on the consequences which might result from admitting Roman catholics in Ireland to civil power, was meditated in a law for raising the qualification of the elective franchise, in counties, from forty shillings to ten pounds; by which means, that privilege would be limited to persons really possessed of property, and less liable to be misled by the priests.

The motion was not very powerfully opposed; the principal speakers against it being sir Robert Inglis and Mr. Estcourt, the two members for Oxford university; the former of whom had been Mr. Peel's successful competitor for its representation. The chief argument used, was an assumption, that the grant of equal privileges to Roman catholics would be the destruction of our protestant establishment. With regard to Ireland, it was said, that discord and agitation were not new features in the condition of that country; that they were not a result of the penal laws; nor would they cease on the removal of civil disabilities. With respect to the divided state of the cabinet, it was asked, why did not the duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel, instead of changing their own line of policy, rather attempt to bring over their colleagues to their views;—especially as the right honorable gentleman confessed that he still thought there was danger in granting catholic emancipation? Against the fear of civil war, it was said, that reliance ought to have been placed on public opinion and the moral determination of the British people: at best, too, the evil day would only be postponed, and resistance to ulterior struggles rendered more difficult. Ministers were also met with taunts on the intimidated spirit from which concession was wrung, and which was rendered evident in their ridiculous provisions, called securities. If Mr. Peel, it was said, and other newly-made converts, thought they could no longer resist, because they had not a majority in the house of commons, why did they refuse to accept a majority? why had not parliament been dissolved? such a course was right at any time, when a measure strongly affecting the constitution was contemplated; but it was peculiarly necessary in the present instance. The marquis of Blandford even maintained, that if the house sanctioned the present audacious invasion of our constitution, it

would break the trust reposed in it by the people of England, who were surprised with the unexpected announcement now made by ministers; constituted as the house was, it did not express that just alarm which was felt by the people for the safety of protestant institutions.

The motion, on the other hand, was supported by sir G. Murray, colonial secretary, Mr. C. Grant, Mr. North, and Mr. Huskisson; while the opposition members who spoke contented themselves with general observations of approbation and congratulation. The positions were repeated and enforced, that the pacification of Ireland was necessary to the safety of the empire; and that without emancipation pacification could not be effected; since all classes had identified themselves with this question, and Ireland had thence fallen into a state in which it could not possibly remain: it must now either advance or recede; for every tie which held society together in that island had been loosened or broken: a certain state of things, indeed, not deserving the name of society, might be maintained by means of the sword; but such an one as would have no analogy to the British constitution. The only intimidation, to which ministers could be accused of yielding, was the fear of continuing such a state of affairs, and aggravating all its evils by gradual accumulation, instead of restoring mutual good-will and the peaceful empire of the law: no other intimidation existed: none was felt in Ireland; for what was the force of an unarmed multitude, when measured against that of the state? But when it was considered, what effects might arise from disunion—since a spirit of resentment was growing up, which excited men against each other,—there appeared a prospect of intimidation, such as did not admit of contempt; for no army could avail to put down a system of private outrage and revenge: the protestant body, at least the body which arrogated to itself that title, knew the state of enthrallment under which they had held the catholics; and that an unarmed multitude must submit: but were we to destroy one part of the people by rousing and inflaming the other? It was rather the duty of government to protect the whole, to ensure for them the greatest degree of protection, and to give them all the privileges which they had a right to enjoy.

Regarding a dissolution of parliament, it was said, that the present house was as capable of discussing this question as any which had sat for the last twenty-five years: it was in fact a question fit for consideration at all times, when brought forward by any member; and was particularly so when it

came with a recommendation from the throne, as necessary for the peace and safety of the united kingdom. A dissolution of parliament, Mr. Peel observed, must leave the catholic association and the elective franchise in Ireland just as they were; for the common law was inadequate to suppress them: then, whatever might be the majority returned for Great Britain, Ireland would return eighty or ninety members in the interest of the association, forming a compact and united band, against the force of which it would be impossible to carry on the local government of the country. It had been said, indeed, increase the army, or the constabulary force; but a greater force could not be employed there. He would state one simple fact: above five-sixths of the infantry had been engaged in aiding the government of Ireland; not so much by repressing violence, as by interposing between two hostile parties: under such circumstances, a re-action must ensue, which would gradually lead to this alternative; namely, to a plan of narrowing the civil government, and resting it on the apex, instead of its proper position on the base. It was also denied that there was anything so peculiar, in the nature of the proposed measure, as to require a special appeal to the people; since it was incorrectly called a violation of the constitution: that constitution was not to be sought for solely in the acts of 1688: its foundations had been laid much earlier—laid by catholic hands, and cemented by catholic blood: but even taking the compact of 1688 to be the foundation of our rights and liberties, the most diligent opponent of the catholic claims would be unable to point out in the bill of rights a single clause by which the exclusion of Roman catholics from seats in parliament was declared to be a fundamental or indispensable principle of the British constitution: that bill merely regarded the liberties guaranteed to the people, and the protection of the throne from the intrusion of popery. To the objection, that the measure contemplated was an unconditional concession, without adequate security for the protestant establishment, it was answered,—that principles of exclusion were not the kind of securities to which the established religion trusted, or ought to trust: the real securities of protestantism would remain, unaffected by this bill, in the unalterable attachment of the people; who, though divided on minor subjects, would unite in resisting the errors of popery: the combined force of habits and circumstances was not so easily to be shaken: the house also, it was said, should look at that great security which it would derive from the generous gratitude of the Irish.

Neither were the actual securities devised so nugatory as they had been represented: Mr. Peel said, that when he looked at the petitions sent from all parts of the country, he could not help being struck with one extraordinary coincidence;—these petitions united in praying for three special securities—the extinction of the catholic association, the correction of the elective franchise in Ireland, and the abolition of the order of jesuits: now the bill which he proposed happened to contain all these securities; and if the necessity of obtaining them were so great as the petitioners contended, let him be answered this question:—would the protestants ever have had the least chance of procuring them, unless his majesty had recommended the disabilities of the Roman catholics to be taken into consideration, with a view to adjustment?

On a division, the motion was carried by a majority of 348 votes against 160; which preponderance not only made manifest the fate of the question in the commons, but indicated an overwhelming weight of ministerial influence, to be exerted, probably with no less success, in the house of peers: resolutions, proposed by Mr. Peel in the committee, were immediately agreed to; and a bill founded on them was introduced, and read for the first time, on the tenth of March.

On the seventeenth, the honourable secretary moved the second reading of this bill; when he was strongly attacked on the desertion of his principles by sir Edward Knatchbull, one of the members for Kent. Mr. Goulburn admitted that he had adopted new opinions on this subject, because nothing else could possibly be done in the present state of Ireland; and contended, that the measure proposed was calculated to give more complete ascendancy to the protestant establishment, by diminishing the irritation, and removing the prejudices of its opponents: this method however of giving permanent security to the protestant establishment, by granting political power to the church of Rome, was strongly condemned by Mr. G. Bankes, who declared that it was but a stepping-stone for the catholics to reach everything they might desire. Lord Palmerston and sir George Murray supported the measure with much eloquence and animation; but the speech which on this occasion claimed and deserved the greatest attention from the house, was that of Mr. Sadler, a man of distinguished abilities, rare honesty, and benevolent disposition, who had lately been returned to parliament for the borough of Newark, by the duke of Newcastle's interest. Mr. Sadler not only argued at great length against the principle of the bill, and its dangerous ten-

dency toward the protestant church; but showed its utter futility in remedying the evils which oppressed Ireland, or repaying the wrongs which she had suffered from so many generations. 'Ireland,' said he, 'degraded, deserted, oppressed, and pillaged, is turbulent; and you listen to the selfish recommendations of her agitators: you seek not to know, or, knowing, you wilfully neglect, her real distresses: if you can calm the agitated surface of society, you heed not that fathomless depth of misery, sorrow, and distress, the troubled waves of which may still heave unseen and disregarded; and this, forsooth, is patriotism! Ireland asks of you bread, and you offer to her catholic emancipation; and this, I presume, is construed to be the taking into consideration, as his majesty recommended, the whole state of Ireland.' Mr. Sadler made an eloquent apostrophe to the memory of Mr. Canning, declaring his own repentance in having aided the too successful attempts to hunt down that illustrious victim;—a man, whom England and the world recognised as an ornament; whose eloquence was, in these days at least, unrivalled; while the energies of his capacious mind, stored with knowledge and elevated by genius, were devoted to the service of his country. 'This,' said the honorable member, 'was the statesman, with whom the present ministers could not act, for a reason which vitiates their present resolutions, and furnishes the most disgraceful page in the annals of our country; but peace to his memory! my humble tribute is paid when it can be no longer heard or regarded; when it is drowned by the voice of interested adulation, now poured into the ears of the living. He fell; but his character is rescued: it rises and triumphs over that of his surviving,—what shall I call them? Let their own consciences supply the hiatus.'

Mr. R. Grant maintained, that it was in vain to speak of applying to the evils of Ireland such cures as it was supposed might be found in the establishment of poor-laws, or the compulsory residence of absentees: even if the expediency of these measures were assumed, this was not the proper time for their application: the question at present was, how existing discontent might be allayed—how the raging pestilence might be stopped. It was only after this had been done, that preventives could be rationally suggested; for although the evils of Ireland had been traced to many causes, these causes themselves, even where they existed, were but the effects of political distinctions, founded on the difference of religious creeds: the house had been told, for instance, to seek for the source of such

evils in the local oppression practised in Ireland, rather than in the general restrictive laws: of local oppression, no doubt, plenty had always existed; but it had ever flourished, while the followers of one creed were armed with power to oppress the adherents of another deprived of all power. The same mischiefs too, it was said, had existed before the reformation, when there was but one religious faith in Ireland: true; and they existed, because even then the same system of excluding the natives from political power had been long followed, though on different grounds. Of all declaimers against the bill, no one was so furious as sir Charles Wetherell, who had refused to draw it up in his official capacity as attorney-general: still in office, under a minister who was understood to have made implicit submission to his word of command the tenure by which office was to be held, and knowing that nothing but the difficulty of supplying his place prevented his discharge,¹ he furiously hurled on the measure, its framers, and its advocates, fragments of the most frantic declamation and personal hostility. Such vituperation called up Mr. Peel; who, after complaining of this outrageous conduct, reverted to the grounds on which he had first proposed the bill; again urging the state of Ireland, and the absolute necessity of doing something; the inability of his opponents to do any thing better, though they vehemently opposed the measure now offered; the impossibility of any government standing, which should set itself, on avowed principles, against concession; and the folly of treating the question as one which had any connexion with religion: the catholics were never excluded, at any time, on account of their religious creed, but for a supposed deficiency of civil worth; and the religious test was applied, not to detect the worship of saints, or any other tenet of their faith, but merely to discover whether they were Roman catholics; to discover, not the religionist, but the bad and intriguing subject: he complained grievously, that an unfair application had been made of his unhappy phrase, that the proposed measure was 'a breaking in upon the constitution of 1688;' by which he meant no more than that there would be an alteration in the words of the bill of rights; and if this were to break in upon the constitution,

¹ In the event of the attorney-general's office becoming vacant, ministers could not pass over sir Nicholas Tindal, the solicitor-general, while his elevation would have occasioned a vacancy in the representation of the university of Cambridge; and after the defeat of Mr. Peel at Oxford, they did not wish to run the risk of another.

then had such 'breaking in' frequently taken place. After feelingly lamenting the loss of private friendship and of public confidence, which he had sustained by proposing these measures, the honorable secretary expressed his conviction that the time would come, though he might not live to see it, when full justice would be done by men of all parties to the motives which had actuated him; when this question would be fully settled, and others would see that he had no other alternative than to act as he had acted. The result of the division was 353 for the second reading of the bill, and 180 against it: during its progress through the committee, several strong amendments were proposed, but all were rejected; and on the thirtieth of March, it was read a third time and passed.

Next day, Mr. Peel, with an unusually large escort of members, presented the bill at the bar of the lords, where it was read for the first time, on the same evening, without opposition. Here its opponents cherished some hopes that its progress might be ultimately arrested: but they were destined to be disappointed; for a great number of peers, who had hitherto opposed the measure, were now either satisfied that the moment had arrived when the claims of the Roman catholics could no longer be resisted with safety, or were at least prepared to sacrifice their opinions to ministerial dictation. The second reading was moved by the duke of Wellington, on the second of April, in a speech replete with nervous eloquence and comprehensive reasoning: nor did the character of his grace ever shine with greater lustre than when he gave utterance to that solemn, pathetic, and beautiful declaration, which had so striking an effect on the present occasion. 'It has been my fortune,' he said, 'to have seen much war,—more than most men; I have been constantly engaged in active duties of the military profession from boyhood until I am grown grey; my life has been passed in familiarity with scenes of death and human suffering; circumstances have placed me in countries where the war was internal, between opposite parties of the same nation: and rather than a country I loved should be visited with the calamities which I have seen, with the unutterable horrors of a civil war,—I would run any risk; I would make any sacrifice; I would freely lay down my life.'

The archbishop of Canterbury, dreading the ulterior designs of the papists more than any consequences which might result from a refusal of their claims, moved an amendment, that the bill should be read a second time that day six months: the debate was continued by adjournment through four successive

nights: the spiritual lords who spoke, beside the mover of the amendment, were the archbishops of York and Armagh, the bishops of London, Salisbury, Durham and Oxford; all of whom opposed the bill, except the last, whose position was peculiarly painful; for whether it was, that he had been convinced by the arguments of his friend and pupil, Mr. Peel, or that a sense of gratitude induced him to lend aid to his ministerial patrons,—he had to refute his own powerful speech, made in the preceding session; and this change of sides, but more especially the defence of his altered sentiments, subjected him to the bitterest reproaches of party spirit. Among temporal peers, the principal defenders of this bill were the lord chancellor, the marquis of Lansdowne, viscount Goderich, the earl of Westmoreland, and lord Plunkett: but no one had a more difficult task to perform than lord chancellor Lyndhurst; for up to the time he had been distinguished by his learned, earnest, and eloquent refutations of all plans for concession; which plans were now repeated, and which refutations he also was called on to confute: even so late as last year, he had declared his conviction, that emancipation, though accompanied by weighty securities, was pregnant with danger to our constitution and establishment; and he now declared his equally conscientious conviction, that emancipation, without any securities at all, would be conducive to the safety and prosperity of that same constitution and establishment. The marquis of Anglesey, who, three months before, had been recalled from his government of Ireland because he held out hopes of concession to its catholic population, now entered the ministerial phalanx which combated for that measure; insisting principally on the military points of view in which the question ought to be placed. ‘Every man,’ he said ‘acquainted with the state of Ireland, would agree with him, that in a time of profound peace, under our exclusive laws, 25,000 men was but a scanty garrison for that country; but in the event of war, or even the rumor of war, that would be an improvident government which did not immediately add to it a force of 15,000 men: 40,000 indeed would scarcely be sufficient under such circumstances. It could not be questioned, that both France and America wished to do us injury; and in case of collision with either of those powers, the first object of both would be to place arms in the hands of the discontented Irish: he argued on the supposition that the exclusive laws were in existence; for if not, those arms would not be received; or if received, would be turned against the donors. Suppose, however, that we were

actually at war, having the European powers combined against us—a contingency by no means unlikely; it would then be madness in any administration not to throw at least 70,000 men into Ireland: but let this bill pass; and then, if war should be declared, we should be able within six weeks to raise in that country 50,000 able-bodied and willing-hearted men, who would find their way to any quarter of the globe, whither we might choose to direct them.'

The duke of Richmond, the earls of Winchelsea, Harewood, Mansfield, Falmouth, and Enniskillen all strongly opposed the bill; while the chief justice, lord Tenterden, declared against it, as a violation of our constitution, and as threatening ruin to our protestant church, which he valued, not only for the purity of its doctrines, but because, of all churches that ever existed, it was most favourable to civil and religious liberty: neither did he see any countervailing benefit likely to be gained by so fatal a sacrifice. After ably commenting on the various acts made to exclude papists from parliament, as well as from various offices of the state, his lordship declared his opinion, that the anticipated tranquillity of Ireland, as a result of this bill, would never be realised. Earl Grey spoke at great length; repeating the argument, that an exclusion of catholics had not originally formed any part of our protestant government, since they had been found in parliament from the reign of Elizabeth down to that of Charles II.; that the exclusion, when it did come, was adopted to guard against political dangers of a temporary nature, which had long since disappeared; that it formed no essential part of the revolution settlement, or of the bill of rights; also that the coronation oath was never intended to restrain the king from consenting to such alterations as parliament in its wisdom might enact: he also entered at great length into that important part of the question, which related to its bearing on the act of union with Scotland. As to the effect of this bill on the state of Ireland, he would not venture to say that it would at once bestow tranquillity, and remove all dangers; but he was sure that, without such a measure, it was impossible to have tranquillity, or to be free from peril: by the exclusive system they had produced more than one rebellion in Ireland, to be extinguished in blood;—but had tranquillity ensued? By no means: on the contrary, the condition of that country had been growing worse and worse every year, requiring a large military establishment to keep the people obedient to the laws, even in a state of peace. Was this the mode, he asked, of making Ireland a useful portion of the empire? Was

this the way we should be preparing for war? But it was urged—if you pass this bill, catholic ascendancy is virtually established on the ruins of the protestant church: that church unfortunately was placed in a situation which could not be freed from difficulties of one sort or another; the great obstacle to its triumph had always been, that it had never been the church of more than a small minority of the Irish people; and that it had been so, was, in his opinion, a consequence of those very laws which they now sought to repeal: take them away, and the number of its disciples would immediately increase; not from the spirit of conversion, for any open attempt in that way would be most impolitic, but from its superior reason, and its more wholesome tenets: which would come more fairly into play, as soon as it should be relieved from that invidious situation in which it now stood: take away the false protection of exclusive laws, and superior excellence would prevail in the conflict of argument.

Lord Eldon, obeying a general call made to him by the house, spoke at great length, and with evident sincerity, on this important question; stating his belief, that ministers, who had introduced the bill, were actuated by a sense of duty to their country, though he lamented their conduct: neither could he acquit the duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel of wilfully deceiving the people, and bringing them into a state of apathy, by leading them into a persuasion that no measure of the kind would be brought forward, at least this session. With regard to the latter gentleman, his lordship feelingly observed;—‘I mention him without the slightest degree of irritation: and if there be any unfavorable impression on his mind toward me, from thinking, that the old maxim, *idem velle atque idem nolle*, is the foundation of all true friendship both in public and private life; I solemnly declare, that I suffered the most excruciating pang I ever endured, when I found that I differed on this question from one, whose concurrence in my opinions for the last fifteen years I found the most effective support.’ On lord Lyndhurst, however, the ex-chancellor was more severe; for that noble person had endeavored to excuse his own inconsistency by fixing on lord Eldon a charge of similar frailty. With regard to the measure itself, he did not rest any part of his opposition to it on the terms of the coronation oath; neither would he contend that to alter any of the laws passed at the revolution was beyond the power of parliament: this, however, looking at the thirteenth, twenty-fifth, and thirtieth of Charles II. he main-

tained,—that the exclusion from parliament, produced by the last of those statutes, was in conformity with the true construction of the acts of 1688, and with the act of union between England and Scotland in the reign of Anne: these, he said, were meant to 'be the governing principles of our glorious constitution of 1688, until a strong necessity for altering it should be made apparent. His lordship went on to show the futility of the securities demanded, and of the measure itself, as it regarded the tranquillisation of Ireland; being followed by lord Plunkett, who said, that he had reserved himself for the purpose of hearing the unanswerable arguments against the bill, which lord Eldon on former occasions had threatened to produce, whenever this measure came fairly before the house: as that noble lord, however, had brought forth nothing but the *ipse dixit* of his own authority, unsustained either by ingenious argument, by historical deduction, or by appeal to public and authenticated documents, he felt himself so far absolved from the necessity of refuting anticipated arguments, that he would apply his observations more particularly to the position—that this bill was calculated to subvert our protestant constitution: after the noble and learned lord had dilated at great length on this topic, the duke of Wellington closed the debate by a general reply to the principal objections made against the measure. The apprehended danger to the Irish church, from the admission of a few Roman catholics into parliament, he treated as absurd, considering that the throne would be filled by a protestant: besides, a fundamental article of the union between the two countries was an union of the two churches; and it was impossible that any mischief could arise to the Irish branch of this united church, without destroying the union of the kingdoms: he next adverted to the charge of inconsistency brought against himself and his colleagues; observing that he well knew the sacrifice they would make in adopting this measure, and how much more of popularity they might gain by placing themselves at the head of the protestant league, with the cry of 'No popery!' but they felt, that in so doing, they would have left on the interests of their country a burden to bear all down; and that they would have deserved the hatred and execration of their fellow citizens. With regard to the secrecy of which he had been accused, his grace begged leave to say, that his noble and learned friend had done that to him which he complained of others having done to himself; or, to use the words of a right honorable and

mutual friend, 'he had thrown at him a large paving-stone, instead of a small pebble: in this he had not acted fairly, since he knew how the cabinet was constructed with regard to this question; and could he declare, that the prime minister had a right to say a single word to any person whatever on the measure, until the person most interested of all in the kingdom had consented to his speaking out? Before his lordship accused him of improper secrecy, he ought to have known the precise day on which he was permitted to open his mouth: with regard to what had been observed respecting a dissolution of parliament, he declared his opinion, that noble lords were mistaken in their notion of the advantages anticipated from such a measure; and were not aware of the consequences and inconveniences of a dissolution at that particular time. 'But,' said his grace, 'when I knew the state of the elective franchise in Ireland—when I recollected the number of men it took to watch one election that took place there last summer—when I foresaw the consequences which a dissolution would produce on the returns to the house of commons, to say nothing of the risks at each election, and the collisions that might have led to something like a civil war—knowing, I say, all these things, I should have been wanting in duty to my sovereign and to my country had I advised his majesty to dissolve his parliament.' The second reading was determined by the votes of 217 peers against 112: on the seventh and eighth of April, the bill passed through a committee, in which many amendments were moved, but none carried; on the tenth, it was read a third time, after another debate, notwithstanding the persevering resistance of its opponents; especially of lord Eldon, who fought stoutly to the end; declaring 'that he would sooner lay down his existence that very night, than awake to the reflection that he had consented to an act which would stamp him as a violator of his oath, a traitor to his church, and a traitor to our constitution:' the third reading was carried by a majority of 213, against 109; three days afterwards, the bill received its final confirmation in the royal assent, very reluctantly extorted from a sovereign who seems to have given it chiefly to relieve himself from a troublesome and annoying question.²

² 'The universal talk,' says lord Eldon to his daughter, 'is about the manner in which the king, at his levee, received the voters for the catholic question—very uncivilly; markedly so toward the lords spiritual who so voted—and the civility with which he received the anti-catholic voters, particularly the bishops.....consent to the bill

If any man had fondly imagined that the removal of disabilities from Roman catholics would prove an immediate or sufficient cure for the disorders of Ireland, he must either have been very ignorant of the state of the country, or have wilfully deceived himself: protestant ascendancy was too deeply and extensively rooted in all its institutions to admit of such a remedy; nor was it likely that the Roman catholics, having acquired means to break their chain, would remain long without trying their efficiency. One fault was, that the measure itself had been gained by agitation, not granted generously as a boon: but no method of granting it would have completely satisfied the Irish; and all the benefit which ought to have been expected from it, was the allaying of heats, and the assuaging of animosities, until other measures could be introduced, which might have the effect of ameliorating the condition of the country, by establishing such security for life and property, that no person would be afraid to lay out his capital there, or to exert his industry: it is only in the bosom of national tranquillity that national prosperity and wealth can be produced.

Emancipation having been gained, Mr. Peel brought in a bill to disfranchise the Irish forty-shilling freeholders, and raise the qualification to ten pounds: this was part and parcel of the general measure, and it met with no serious opposition even in Ireland; for the association was extinct, the peasantry were tired of the privilege, and the landlords were not very anxious to retain those instruments of bribery and corruption, which had recoiled on themselves: the measure, however, was one of great importance; for it has preserved some balance in the Irish representation, by keeping a portion of it still in the hands of protestant landowners, and has accordingly been a favorite subject of reprobation among agitators of all degrees. The great leader of that class presented himself, on the fifteenth of May, to redeem his pledge, by offering to take his seat for Clare: on the success of this application he had staked his professional reputation, and he attempted to secure it by two pleas: the first resting only on a legal quibble, that the act of union, though it forbade a Roman catholic to sit in parliament, imposed no penalties on him for doing so; the second more plausible, as

he certainly did; but with a language of reluctance, pain, and misery, which, if it had been represented, would have prevented a great deal of that rattling which carried the measure.—*Life*, vol. iii. p. 88.

founded on the enactments of the new statute; although this was expressly limited to 'such persons, professing the Roman catholic religion as should, after its commencement, be returned members of the house of commons.' Both these pleas were overruled, after long debates, and an elaborate argument of Mr. O'Connell himself at the bar of the house: but if the provision, which excluded the great agitator from his seat, was designed, as report went, in a paltry spirit of hostility against the man, it had no other effect than that of sending him back to be re-elected by his constituents; and inflaming him with resentment against those whom he viewed in the light of persecutors: in place therefore of that gratitude with which all catholics were to receive emancipation, their champion now loaded ministers with the most opprobrious epithets, as men who, having been false to their own party, could never be true to any other: in a similar spirit, he announced his ulterior design to effect a repeal of the union by that system of agitation which had already proved so successful; and this purpose he deliberately followed up by the most inflammatory harangues, and various other methods of popular excitement.

Almost the whole interest of this session was absorbed in the one great question. During its discussion in parliament, it occasioned a duel between the duke of Wellington and the earl of Winchelsea; the latter of whom received his adversary's fire; but nobly declining to aim at such a life as that which he had within his power (for he was an extraordinary marksman), he discharged his own pistol in the air. After its final settlement, it produced very important consequences, by driving a large body of ultra tories, through pique, into the ranks of the reformers: these were unjustly indignant at the duke and his satellites for precipitating a measure which could not have been long stayed; since the numerical majority of Irish catholics, inflamed against a dominant minority, was so great, that nothing less than a complete conquest of the country would have kept them in subjection: but how could that conquest have been effected, when a majority of the British house of commons was in favor of emancipation? As the commons of England hold the strings of the purse, how could the sinews of war have been supplied without their concurrence? It may be said perhaps, that resort should have been had to a dissolution of parliament: but it is certain, that this measure had lost its interest with a very large portion of the nation; while not a few were

anxious to close at all hazards a question, which had long disturbed tranquillity, and become a serious obstacle to the transaction of public business : besides, the whigs were a powerful body ; and being, as they would have been, joined by the moderates and every other party, except that of the high church tories, they would inevitably have carried the elections in their favor ; so that, as the duke of Wellington observed in his place, there would have been all the hazard of a collision approaching to a civil war, without any probability of a result favorable to the adversaries of emancipation.

On the eighth of May, the chancellor of the exchequer opened his budget with the gratifying intelligence, that the revenue of the preceding year had so far exceeded his estimate, as to have left a clear surplus of nearly £6,000,000 for the sinking fund : but for the present year, as the house was anxious to abolish the absurd system of defraying the expense of military and naval pensions, or the 'dead weight,' as it was called, by postponing its burdens, he estimated the gross revenue at £51,347,000, and the expenditure at £48,333,593 ; by which means he left only a clear sinking-fund of £3,000,000 for diminishing our public debt. After this financial statement, which produced but little discussion, the prorogation of parliament was preceded by no measure of importance, except an abortive motion for parliamentary reform : it was introduced by the marquis of Blandford, one of those members of the ultra tory faction, who, in disgust at the conduct of the present ministry and parliament, had been converted into reformers, quite as suddenly and inconsistently as the men of whose apostacy they complained had become liberal and tolerant. 'After what had happened,' said his lordship, 'the country demanded some statutory provision to secure its agriculture, its manufactures, and its trade ; but more especially to secure protestant interests against the influx and increase of the Roman catholic party : one mode of securing this, and at the same time of purifying the representation, would be to abolish the borough-market, which had now been thrown open to catholics.'

The noble mover of this question was in a situation similar to that of the lamb in the fable, which called on the wolf, little knowing how near he was to the fold : the motion was made rather in the nature of a notice than with any design of having the topics which it embraced fully discussed at this late period of the session : it was, however, hailed and supported by some of the old reformers, though on very different

grounds from that dislike of free trade, and apprehension of catholic influence, which animated the mover; while Mr. W. Smith, in voting for the resolutions, expressed great satisfaction that the relief bill had produced one effect which its best friends had not anticipated;—the transformation of many among the highest tories of the land into something very like radical reformers. On the twelfth of this month lord chancellor Lyndhurst moved the second reading of a bill which he had brought in, for expediting business in the courts of equity, and which proposed that the crown should have power to nominate another equity judge; he took this occasion to mollify the resentment of his aged predecessor, by extolling highly his judicial labors, whilst he kept his failings in the background: a pardonable course towards an old statesman, who, whatever those failings may have been, was at least free from all hypocrisy, and whose extraordinary power of intellect was only equalled by the integrity of his principles.³ This bill was read a third time on the twenty-first; but the session being far advanced, the subject was deferred to another year.

Parliament was prorogued by commission on the twenty-fourth of June; about which time the legal arrangements, rendered necessary by the dismissal of sir Charles Wetherell, were completed. Sir James Scarlett, who had filled the office of attorney-general under Mr. Canning, readily consented to cast aside his whig principles, and serve under the duke of Wellington; and that the impropriety of again passing over the head of the solicitor-general might be avoided, the latter was promoted to the first seat in the court of common pleas; chief-justice Best being removed into the house of peers, under the title of lord Wynford, and Mr. Sugden, an eminent chancery barrister, made solicitor-general: but the most important change was, the retirement of the duke of Clarence from his popular administration of the admiralty, and the return of viscount Melville as first lord; whose conduct in his former administration had been marked by numerous transgressions of the most serious character,

³ A subscription was opened this year among his friends and admirers to found the Eldon Law Scholarship, at Oxford; which soon amounted to the sum of £7800: one of his admirers, Charles Francis, esq., founded also and endowed, at his own expense, 'the Eldon School at Vauxhall, for 150 boys; 'to perpetuate his memory, and to commemorate his able, zealous, and constant defence of our protestant reformed religion against every innovation.'

especially on the coasts of Spain; and whose partiality to his countrymen was proverbial: he was succeeded at the board of control by lord Ellenborough, who had held the privy seal, which was now given to lord Rosslyn, lord Grey being objected to by the king.

The foreign affairs which require notice, as affecting Great Britain, were principally those in the East, where Turkey, now at the mercy of the Russian autocrat, was obliged to sue for peace. The terms granted were as follow:—the Pruth to constitute the European limit, as before; but Silistria to be dismantled: an alteration to be made in the Asiatic boundaries; so that the whole eastern coast of the Black Sea, from the Kuban to the harbor of St. Nicholas, together with the fortresses of Anapa and Poti, should remain in possession of Russia: the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia to be confirmed in their rights; but the Hospodars to be nominated only for life, and no Turks allowed to dwell there: free trade on the Black Sea, and navigation through the Straits for vessels belonging to Russia, as well as all other countries at peace with the Porte: the sultan to defray the expenses of the war; and, finally, to accede to the treaties concluded at London, regarding the Greeks. Thus, while Russia cautiously but secretly advanced nearer and nearer to the grand object of its ambitious sovereigns, Greece came to be admitted into the list of European states, and fresh prospects unfolded themselves for the East. On the twenty-second of March, a protocol had been signed for the purpose of fixing the undetermined limits of the new kingdom; but it was now agreed to circumscribe its territory within a much narrower space: instead of adopting any boundary marked out by nature,—even that which would have comprehended the gulf of Volo on the east, and Arta on the west; and which would have left the Grecian state, though still too small, yet compact and defensible,—it was now proposed to draw the line still farther to the south, commencing on the east at Zeitoun, near Thermopylæ, and running across the country in the direction of Vlachori, till it reached the river Aspropotamos, whose course it was to follow as far as the sea; thus excluding, not only Thessaly, but Acarnania also; and leaving the whole western frontier of northern Greece open to, or rather inviting the attacks of, its barbarian foes: and this determination was made without the wishes of the people being consulted, or any communication made to the Greek government. It seemed as if British statesmen were only

anxious to leave a perpetual cause of strife, war, and bloodshed, which might afterwards turn to the account of Russia.

The session of the states-general of the Netherlands, in the present year, was less tranquil and satisfactory than any that had been held since the restoration: though the king himself was not unpopular, his government had produced general dissatisfaction by some obnoxious measures; particularly by dismissing judges who were supposed to be too obstinate; by great partiality in its official appointments; and by exercising much severity against the press, when it happened to criticise the policy of administration. As soon as the states-general met, the second chamber occupied itself in discussing an immense number of petitions recommending improvement in the existing system; but though some amelioration was made, government rejected the proposal, that cases of alleged abuse of the liberty of the press should be tried by a jury: it also successfully opposed itself to the introduction of grand juries, and the extension of jury trials to the provincial courts and other criminal tribunals: on the other hand, a body in the chamber resisted and censured all its measures; and the session ended with more excitement than had been shown at its commencement. In France, the session closed, after much embarrassment; and a new ministry was formed, under the presidency of prince Polignac; all the members of which belonged to the extreme right, or that section which was known to the public as advocates of irresponsible power in politics, and of spiritual dominion in matters of religion. Nothing could exceed the unpopularity of these appointments; more especially that of M. Bourmont, who claimed the confidence of his monarch for having betrayed Napoleon at Waterloo; and of Labourdonnaye, who had signalised himself by recommending a frightful system of proscription, and had formally classified those descriptions of people on whom he demanded vengeance. Incessant prosecutions of the press, for having boldly denounced these ministers and their policy, tended only to increase the general indignation; and associations were formed to resist the payment of taxes, in case ministers should attempt to rule without a chamber: prosecutions then increased in number; divisions arose in the cabinet itself, and M. de Labourdonnaye retired: nevertheless, the expression of public opinion against the administration continued as strong and unanimous as ever.

In Portugal, the wretch Miguel began to show his true colors: after premature attempts at insurrection, in favor of

Donna Maria, had failed in Oporto, the usurper made use of this occurrence to multiply arrests in the capital: every individual, whom any creature of government disliked, or any private enemy chose to denounce by an anonymous accusation, was instantly consigned to the horrid dungeons of the Limoeiro, or of St. Julian: while sentences of exile pronounced by a special commission on the conspirators of Oporto, were arbitrarily converted into capital punishment by the tyrant: in comparison, however, with death, the condition of the prisoners, with whom the jails and fortresses were crowded to suffocation, was scarcely to be envied: though all were uncondemned, and most of them innocent, the whole were delivered over to the merciless authority of apostolic miscreants, who seemed to find no gratification so great as that of inventing new modes of misery. Among the incarcerated were many affluent persons, who charitably contributed to support the poorer prisoners, whom their tyrants were willing to leave in utter starvation: to deprive the latter of this alleviation of misery, government ordered the former to be removed from the dungeons of the city, and immured in the fortresses of St. Julian, Belem, and Bugio: without being brought to trial, every one was cut off from communication, by speech or writing, even with the members of his own family: many died by famine and suffocation; and suspicion was strong that in some instances poison had seconded the usurper's jealousy: no rank, sex, or character was respected: a child, five years old, was kept in solitary confinement five days, and subjected to all the tortures of a prison, in order to extort evidence against its father and mother; a refugee Spanish bishop, who had been a member of the Cortes of 1812, and had since lived in obscurity and peace at Lisbon, was thrust into the dungeons of St. Julian, where he died within four days, in consequence of the brutal treatment he received from Telles Jordao, a brutal wretch worthy of the worst times of the inquisition, to whom was entrusted the government of that fortress for the very purpose of torturing its inmates. All these acts of the usurper were encouraged by his execrable mother, who took advantage of a season, during which her son was confined by an accident, to infuse her own diabolical spirit into the police, removing a minister who had sufficed even for Miguel, and replacing him by a minion of her own. The same sanguinary scenes were acted at Oporto, where the rage of the tyrant was backed by the bigotry of the priests; who in their sermons and publications applauded the work of

death and devastation, as an acceptable offering to the Divine Majesty: one Jose Agostino, a monk and court preacher, published a pamphlet, called 'The Beast Flayed,' urging the necessity of multiplying sacrifices, and recommending that the constitutionalists should be hanged up by the feet, and 'the people joyfully treated daily with fresh meat from the gallows.' To crown the atrocities of Don Miguel, he who had conspired against his father, who had usurped the throne of his brother, who had laughed at promises made, and oaths sworn, in the face of Europe, now attempted to assassinate his own sister, because she had been Don Pedro's regent, and had been faithful to his constitution: irritated by the absence of one of her servants, whom he suspected to have been sent to England for the purpose of making known the dreadful state of the country, this modern Nero burst into her room with a pistol, to which a bayonet was affixed, and attempted to strike her; but her chamberlain, the conde Camarido, who threw himself before the royal assassin, received the blow: he then fired at the princess; but the ball missed her, and killed a servant by her side: other domestics, however, interfered, and she was hurried away from his fury.

The necessities of the government increased, notwithstanding a forced issue of paper money; and recourse was had to the most rigid and ruinous expedients to fit out an expedition against Terceira, one of the Azores, and the only spot within the dominions of Portugal which remained true to its rightful monarch: thither the count Villa Flor, who, with the marquis Palmella and nineteen other general officers, had been condemned in his absence, had contrived to escape, and taken the chief command; but though the expedition sailed from Lisbon in the middle of June, and the troops succeeded in effecting a landing, they were totally defeated by the islanders under Villa Flor. In the mean time, the tyrant's interest was supported at Madrid by the great influence of his mother over the family of Ferdinand; who himself regarded Miguel with peculiar complacency, from the circumstance of his having destroyed a constitutional government: in the course therefore of the present year, he acknowledged his title to the throne of Portugal, although the other sovereigns of Europe had the grace to keep aloof from any communication with his government: the Portuguese refugees, indeed, and the ministers of Don Pedro, insisted that they ought to do more, and drive him from his throne by positive interference: these applications were addressed particularly to the British ministry, on the

strength of treaties subsisting between the two countries; but lord Aberdeen, though he admitted to their fullest extent the obligations created by those treaties, maintained that they gave no countenance to the demand of an armed interference on our part, in order to remedy the consequences of an internal revolution: considering that no distinction ought to be made between the two claimants of the Portuguese crown, ministers professed their resolution to observe a strict neutrality in regard to all military operations: when therefore a considerable number of Portuguese exiles resident on our southern coast appeared to have some design of fitting out an expedition, the Brazilian minister was informed that government would not permit such a scheme to be carried on in British harbors; and that for security's sake these refugees must remove farther from the coast: the envoy then declared, that those troops were about to be conveyed to Brazil; and accordingly, four vessels, having on board 652 officers and men, under the command of count Saldanha, set sail from Plymouth; but the British ministry, suspecting their intention of landing at Terceira, despatched an armed force, under captain Walpole of the *Ranger*, to cruise before that island, with instructions to use force, if necessary, to drive them from the coast; also to keep them in sight, until convinced, by the course they were steering, and the distance to which they had proceeded, that they had no intention of returning to the western isles. The suspicions of our government were in this instance justified; for the Portuguese armament appeared off Terceira, and was discovered by captain Walpole standing right in for Port Praya: two shots were then fired for the purpose of bringing them to, but without effect; when the ship, on board of which was Saldanha himself, appeared determined to push in at all hazards, a shot from point-blank distance was fired into her, which killed one man, and wounded another: the vessels then lay to, and an angry correspondence ensued; but the Portuguese were driven off, and watched by the British commander, until they arrived within 500 miles of Scilly; captain Walpole, after this noble exploit, in which without doubt he was a reluctant agent, then returned to his station; and count Saldanha proceeded to Brest.

Such an occurrence excited much notice in Europe, and was brought under discussion in the British parliament; being represented as a direct act of hostility in favor of the detestable usurper against the acknowledged queen of Portugal, then residing in England: it was considered as an armed interference

for Miguel, at the very moment when we pretended that the duties of neutrality prevented our interference altogether; and it was asked,—if we were not bound by treaties to assist the queen in recovering her crown, whence arose our right to prevent her from making any attempt by means of her own subjects? Why, when recognising her right, refusing to admit the title of Miguel, and pretending to maintain a strict impartiality, had we interfered by force against a lawful sovereign?

In answer to this, it was alleged, that the warlike armament lately attacked, had been fitted out in an English port: whether the observance of neutrality between two competitors for the crown of Portugal, one claiming it by direct succession, the other by a vote of the Cortes, and in actual possession, was right or wrong, appeared in this case a matter of indifference; but as it had been decided on, no other course could justly have been taken; and if Miguel's armament had been fitted out in a British port, it would have met with a similar interruption. In fact, if ministers were to be attacked, the object of attack ought to have been their maintenance of neutrality toward a perjured tyrant, who had voluntarily sworn to our government that he would obey the laws, and preserve the constitution of his country; not their adoption of proceedings, which that maintenance of neutrality rendered imperative: in the mean time, negotiations had been going on at Rio Janeiro between Don Pedro and the ministers of England and Austria, to effect some arrangement of affairs; while a deputation had been sent by the Portuguese constitutionalists, to point out the true state of those affairs, and urge him to adopt active measures: Pedro, however, refused to accept propositions from foreign negotiators, which involved any sacrifice of his daughter's claims; while he assured the Portuguese, that he would act so as to show his determination to maintain the rights of their queen, without entering into any compromise with the usurper of her throne: he did not, however, strengthen the hopes of his friends, at this time, by the resolution which he adopted of recalling his daughter from England to Brazil; and the British government itself remonstrated with him on the impolicy of that step: but he had ulterior objects in view, which they could not penetrate.

The history of Spain this year furnishes but few events of importance: in the early part of it, Ferdinand lost his queen; and before its close, he contracted a third marriage with a princess of Naples, the celebrated Christina; to the great dis-

satisfaction of the adherents of his brother, Don Carlos : conspiracies in Catalonia, supposed to have been excited by the count d'Espagne for the sake of private advantage, were followed by cruel executions; but the rest of the country remained tranquil : its finances, however, were in so dreadful a state of exhaustion from a long continuance of misgovernment and exclusion, that Cadiz was declared a free port, in the hope of alluring back foreign commerce to one of its old and favorite abodes : but at this very time, the Spanish government, which had been driven from the English money market by its faithless conduct respecting the Cortes bonds, ran the risk of losing its credit with all European states, by a discovery of its fraud in the celebrated case of the French loan. It would lead us too far from our limits to detail the affairs of the South American states ; but those provinces, though lost to Spain, were as yet far from the attainment of internal tranquillity : the struggles of anarchy, for the cause of republicanism, abetted by superstition on one side, and infidelity on the other, were now beginning.

Toward the end of this year, the attention of the British nation was withdrawn from foreign transactions to the general and increasing distress of its own population among the agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial classes : the undoubted existence of this distress was assigned to various causes, according to the conflicting tenets or interests of the reasoners : free trade, a metallic currency, and the low prices of agricultural produce, were each insisted on as the origin of those evils which afflicted the country ; while the prohibitory system in commerce, an unrestricted paper currency, and high protective duties for the corn-grower, were proposed in turn, with equal confidence, as remedies. Whatever causes aggravated the general suffering at this period, its chief origin might be traced to the enormous pressure of our national debt, arising from a reckless war expenditure, which bore heavily on productive industry : to the evils which affected the agricultural classes, were to be added the fatal effects of the poor laws, tending to ruin the farmer by the same system of expenditure which demoralised the laborer ; also that reduction of the circulating medium completed last year, which, by almost doubling taxation and crippling industry, contributed to augment the general perplexity and dissatisfaction. With regard to our manufacturing and commercial interests, the competition of other nations, since the peace, had destroyed those high profits which counterbalanced the exactions of the revenue : neither

had trade yet recovered itself, or commercial enterprise regained its elasticity, since 1826, when speculation, with its consequent panic, occasioned such immense pecuniary losses: nor can it be denied, that the new system of trade and commerce increased the evil, by throwing numerous hands out of employment, in its transition state from restriction to comparative freedom. To these more serious causes of calamity were added a bad harvest and a severe winter; all which contributed to bring the productive classes of the community, and especially the lowest orders, into a state of suffering and misery, which every one, except the minister and his adherents, together with those who lived on the produce of the taxes, acknowledged to be real: unfortunately, the wretched artisans, ignorantly ascribing the reduction of wages, not to the necessities of trade, but to the avarice of their employers, had recourse to their usual correctives, voluntary idleness and destruction of property. The example was set by the silk-weavers of Spitalfields and Bethnal-green, and the mischief done had not been equalled for sixty years: the same spirit showed itself at Macclesfield and Coventry; nor did the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire escape the contagion: in all these places, machinery to an immense amount was destroyed; and the artisans who showed a disposition to labor in their vocation rather than to riot, were subjected to violent outrages from their fellow-workmen, until the arrival of troops, and the apprehension of many active rioters, restored some degree of tranquillity. Lawless and mischievous as these proceedings were, a great load of deplorable misery lay at the bottom: labor nowhere received its adequate remuneration; and so low were the wages received in many branches of manufacture at this period, that a report, drawn up at Huddersfield by a committee of masters appointed to investigate the condition of working people, stated, 'that within the several townships engaged in fancy business, there were 13,000 individuals, who had not more than twopenny half-penny per day to live on; out of which they had to pay for the wear and tear of their looms.' It never can be too often or too strongly insisted on, that the first and greatest object of statesmen and legislators is to discover, not only the means of employment, but the adequate reward of labor: this is the grand method of rendering a nation contented, prosperous, and powerful: without this, most difficult will be its improvement in those principles which form the best foundation of its happiness.

With regard to Ireland, that unfortunate country had been thrown into such a state of excitement by the harangues of the member for Clare, that scenes of violence and outrage, like those from which the emancipation bill was to relieve it, soon presented themselves: the feelings of parties still continued in full force; hostile meetings, with a considerable loss of life, took place in the counties of Armagh, Leitrim, Cavan, and Monaghan, where nothing but the presence of a military force prevented open war; while in Tipperary, matters proceeded to such a length, that the magistrates expressed an unanimous opinion, that nothing but a revival of the insurrection act would secure the peace of the country: this however could not be effected; for it had not been suspended, but had actually expired, and parliament was not sitting.

It certainly was soon perceived, that catholic emancipation had failed to lay the spirit of discontent; and that the pacification of our sister island still remained to exercise the ingenuity of British statesmen. Ireland never has been, nor is she likely soon to be, cordially united with her conquerors: so feeble indeed is the connexion, that it would long ago have been dissolved, but for the superior might of England: yet if Ireland has always been a drag on this country; if she has been a source of weakness rather than of strength; an angry foe instead of an attached friend;—she has been what the general conduct of England made her: even during the period when the religion of the two nations was the same, the state of affairs was but little better; for a spirit of tyranny and rapacity was ever at work, transferring the rich lands of that unfortunate country to her ruthless invaders; and the fiery disposition of her sons was purposely roused by insults and injuries to rebellion, in order that they might be plundered with a greater show of propriety: the reformation never obtained a footing among her native inhabitants; and instead of allowing to others that freedom which we claimed ourselves, we employed our troops to turn the priests out of their churches and livings, which parliament transferred to the clergy of its own communion, though their adherents did not amount to one-tenth of the population. When this transfer, however, was effected, a large portion of the landed property still belonged to the catholic nobility and gentry; so that their spiritual guides were not wholly left to depend on the contributions of a starving peasantry: but the Irish having taken part with the Stuart dynasty, nearly nine-tenths of the intire property of the realm were confiscated under Cromwell and William III., and given

to protestants: these, looking up to England for support, considered the poor natives, huddled on their estates, rather as implacable foes than as tenants and dependents: hence the little sympathy that has ever existed between the upper and lower classes. Indeed, most of the landholders soon quitted the country, letting their estates to middlemen, by whom they were sublet, on the most exorbitant terms, to the wretched peasants, who have been brought to as low a state of misery as any serfs in Europe: in the mean time, a comparatively small party, under the banners of an Orange confederacy, have held a tyrannical sway over the land, perverting or denying justice, and perpetuating the most intolerable abuses.

When the foundation of this system was laid, the population of Ireland did not exceed 2,000,000; but it has now risen to 8,000,000, of which no less than 6,500,000 are catholics; so that all arrangements derogatory to their character and interests daily become more offensive: besides, by their own exertions they have acquired political power, and are enabled to return a large body of representatives to parliament. Of these circumstances the great agitator has taken advantage; urging the people to remonstrate, to proclaim their wrongs, and to demand full participation in all those salutary institutions, which they were taught to expect when they consented to the union: at the same time, while he stimulates them to claim equal privileges and equal laws, he represses outrage, and teaches them to agitate within the pale of the law, and by legal means.

Against these their claims there exist many and strong antagonist forces. There is that in the very nature of popery which seems to forbid protestants to arm it with power, or to advance its interests; there is the influence of great families, enriched with Irish spoil, who have by length of time acquired a title to this property; there is a tory faction in England, desirous of punishing the Irish people for contributing so effectually to extinguish their privileges and reform the British legislature; nor are they less anxious to uphold in full vigor a church establishment, which has always proved most fruitful in advantages to the scions of our aristocracy. Thus the whole empire has been kept in a perpetual ferment, to the grievous injury of all classes; nor has any definite plan of remedial measures yet been proposed, without being found impracticable or insufficient. One party, ascribing all the evil to popery, declares that a leaf must be taken out of William the Conqueror's book; and that a system, so false and anti-social, so incompatible with civil and religious liberty,

must be extirpated: another asserts, with equal confidence, that the grand nuisance is a protestant establishment; which, being repudiated by the great mass of the people, ought to be cut down to the immediate wants and necessities of those who respect its doctrines: others ascribe the existing misery to absentee landlords, and a want of provision for the destitute poor: true, says a different set; a body of men more indifferent to the welfare of their tenantry and laborers does not exist, than the Irish landed proprietors; but to charge these persons with all the evils which afflict the country, is as absurd as to lay them at the door of the established church: their root lies far back; for it has been the custom, from time immemorial, to divide the paternal inheritance, whether freehold or leasehold, among every surviving member of the family; which division and subdivision of property cuts the land into patches, and rapidly breeds an agricultural population, clothed in rags, fed on potatoes, and worked like slaves; in order, therefore, to produce any degree of comfort, the first step must be to clear away the present occupants of the soil, rather than to stereotype the evil by a system of parochial settlements;—ejection and emigration consequently are the best modes of relief: not a few advise the outlay of capital in Ireland, and the employment of her redundant population in works of general utility; forgetting, that before this can be done, tranquillity must be established by some other means; since no capitalist will expend his money, or exert his industry, where life and property are insecure: where ‘his yard-measure is a sword, and his ledger only a return of killed and wounded.’

Thus, encompassed with evils, the unhappy country has clung, with a species of unerring instinct, to its great agitator, who accelerated the first grand measure which opened a prospect of independence to catholic Ireland: even from their miserable pittance, the half starved peasantry joyfully contribute a portion to remunerate their benefactor, for his loss of time, and sacrifice of professional emoluments; and while his power, greater than that which any subject of this empire ever before possessed, is met by scoffs and insults in some quarters, and by alarm and terror, or indignant denunciation in others, he proceeds on his course; flinging back the reproaches of his adversaries, and taunting them as the instruments which raised him to this height. ‘Recall this power,’ he says, ‘which you have given me, by the concession of justice to my country: then shall I sink back into the ranks of the people, and become as harmless as the lowest peasant.’

Under such evils, mixed up as they are with the very form and constitution of society in Ireland, the most important business of the empire is interrupted; a military force is kept up in the country as large as that which is necessary for the protection of British India; and the very existence of an administration depends on the countenance which it may receive from a body of Irish agitators. To predict how long such a state of things can last, or to point out how it can be altered, is not necessarily demanded of the historian: he has fulfilled his duty, when he has fairly and impartially laid the case before his readers: but as it is impossible to remedy these evils by force of arms, in the present disposition of the British house of commons and of the Irish agitators, the great aim of our legislators should be the discovery of a different mode of cure. This in fact is now the grand problem in our national policy. While to its solution the abilities of statesmen are steadily directed, all party feeling should be laid aside, all animosity forgotten: it is only to be effected in a time of peace; and if war should overtake us in circumstances which might be called a premium for invasion, Ireland would probably be lost.

Our domestic annals this year were marked by the conflagration of York Minster, that glory of English architecture: great part of the choir, with the organ, fell a sacrifice to the devouring element; but the noble east window was fortunately preserved with little damage: the fire was traced to a man named Martin, brother to the celebrated artist of that name, who was subsequently tried for the crime at York, and found to be insane: but a meeting was immediately held, and a sufficient subscription raised by the nobility and gentry of this great aristocratic county, for the purpose of restoring its magnificent cathedral, after the original plan, under the direction of Mr. Smirke. London received additional beauty and convenience from the opening of the new Fleet, or Farringdon market; forming a handsome quadrangle of 232 feet by 150, and standing on a surface of one acre and a half: the purchase of its site, and the expense of buildings, was estimated at about £280,000. The new Post-Office also, one of the finest edifices by which the capital is ornamented, was opened in September for the transaction of business, and an improved system was adopted for sorting, arranging, and delivering letters. A still more important alteration however took place this year in the police establishment of our metropolis, for the institution of which the public owes a large debt of gratitude to Mr. Peel.⁶

⁶ Now sir Robert Peel.

In the admirable regulations drawn up for the instruction of this domestic force, the grand object attended to was the prevention of crime: the whole metropolitan district was formed into five local divisions, each division into eight sections, and each section into eight beats; the limits of all being clearly defined, and distinguished by letters and numbers: the force itself was divided into companies, each having one superintendent, four inspectors, sixteen serjeants, and 144 police constables; being also subdivided into sixteen parties, each consisting of a serjeant and nine men: accurate rules were laid down for the commencement and regulation of their duty; and during the late times of change produced by the imperative nature of circumstances on our institutions, nothing has contributed more to the repression of tumult, and to the security of person and property, than this corps: several years however elapsed before the corporation of the city of London could be persuaded to follow such an example, and give up their vested interests in the old system of watchmen.

It was not without some excitement of public indignation that, when parliament assembled on the fourth of February, the royal speech contained only a very qualified admission of the existence of national distress. In the latter part of the preceding year, our premier had made an extensive tour through various districts of the country; but having been confined almost wholly to the mansions of his noble hosts, where a splendid hospitality awaited him, he had very little opportunity of witnessing the misery under which the lower orders were at this time groaning: accordingly, as he may be said to have seen none, he very confidently asserted that none existed; and as it is not usual to dispute the word of a military premier, the other members of administration, somewhat in the manner of a Turkish divan, bowed their heads submissively to the dictates of their chief.

In the house of commons, however, this incorrect and injudicious assertion produced so much indignation, that sir Edward Knatchbull, a county member of the high tory party, proposed an amendment to the address, assuring his majesty, 'that distress was general among all the productive classes of the community;' and being supported by 105 votes, he left ministers, who had but 158, in a weak majority of 53: the amendment, proposed in the upper house by earl Stanhope, being vitiated by his notions on the currency question, was supported by a minority of only nine. The cession of the catholic claims had produced a sort of approximation between

the duke and the whig party, who became unwilling to abandon him to tory vengeance, though their friendship was but lukewarm and self-interested; without it, however, the ministerial forces must have been routed at the very opening of the campaign. Lord Blandford, next day, when the report was brought up, moved what he called 'a wholesome admonition to the throne,' by way of appendage to the address; but this vindictive effusion, though seconded by Mr. O'Connell, and teeming with denunciations against our corrupt borough system, was repudiated by all true reformers, and found only eleven votes in its favor: fair warning, however, was given to ministers, that they must enter into a closer connexion with the whigs, if they wished to reckon on their support: sir Francis Burdett, in his speech, said, that 'when the prime minister of England was found so shamefully insensible to the suffering and distress which were painfully apparent throughout the land; when, instead of meeting such an overwhelming pressure of calamity with some measure of relief, or at least, some attempt at it, he sought to stifle every important inquiry; when he called that a partial and temporary evil, which was both long-lived and universal;—he could not look on such a mournful crisis, in which public misfortune was insulted by ministerial apathy, without hailing any prospect of change in the system that produced it. What should we say to the ignorance that could attribute our distresses to the introduction of machinery, and the application of steam,—that noblest among human inventions, to which men of science and intelligence mainly ascribed our prosperity? He felt high and unfeigned respect for the premier's abilities in the field; but he could not help now thinking, that his grace had done himself only justice, when he said, a few months before he accepted his present office, that he should be fit to inhabit an asylum of a certain nature, if he were ever induced to take such a burden on his shoulders; in fact, both he (sir Francis) and many honorable members around him, had long treated this illustrious individual with much tenderness, because they felt that he had conferred immense benefits on his country: he was the only man in England who could have accomplished what he had done; but his praise had been in proportion, and his recompense commensurate, in returns of confidence and approbation: the time, however, was now come, when it would be necessary for him to do more.'

A motion for inquiry into the state of national distress by a committee of the whole house of peers, was made by lord

Stanhope; when the earl of Eldon found himself in the strange and unusual situation of an opposition lord, condemning the language employed in the king's speech, while he accused his ancient colleagues of coming down to parliament with a declaration that there were 'other causes' for the distress of the country, which they did not deem it expedient to specify; and which they left for each man's sagacity to guess at as he might. The duke of Wellington, while he still denied that the existence of distress was so extensive as had been represented, and supported his opinion by the augmented consumption of various articles, by the increase of buildings, by the state of our saving banks, and by the advancing traffic on railroads and canals, maintained that the power of redress was beyond the reach of parliament; and he defied noble lords opposite to do anything on the subject, which should be at once politic and satisfactory, expedient and efficacious: was it then right for parliament to interfere, where it was utterly impossible to do good? The noble mover might recommend a committee; but to what end would they follow his counsel, if he could lead them no farther? and not one step farther could he go.

The marquis of Lansdowne had no hesitation in declaring what he confidently thought were the causes of distress: though fully aware that much of it might have been produced by transition from a state of war to peace, yet he could not help recollecting, that a very great part of the difficulties, out of which we now had to extricate ourselves, was to be ascribed to that fatal perseverance with which, during so many years, we had persisted in contracting permanent money engagements in a depreciated currency: that was the root of the present evil; but, in saying so, he did not forget, that unfortunate as those engagements were, they nevertheless were engagements, which the honor of parliament was bound to respect, and which we must find means to discharge: it was, however, one thing to see the cause, and another to point out a remedy: the only one which he saw at present likely to unite all opinions, was retrenchment, qualified by a diminution of taxation. Lord King proposed, as an amendment, the appointment of a select committee; but this was received with as little favor as the original motion; which was lost, on a division, by 118 against 25.

But the most remarkable debate arose in the house of commons, on a similar motion made by Mr. Davenport. In the course of its discussion, which lasted four nights, the leading

members of all parties delivered their opinions, which were in many respects contradictory, on the extent as well as on the causes of the evil. The opponents of the motion considered the ultimate views of its supporters as directed to the restoration, or at least to a modification, of our paper currency; and that to grant it, would be a public announcement that some such measure was intended: most members seemed to think, that, even if errors had been committed, to undo now what had been done, would occasion more harm than good: if there were any particular measures, it was said, which individuals thought likely to be beneficial, let them be brought forward, and let each be discussed on its own merits: thus the subject would assume a manageable form; but by launching forth into an investigation which included every question, the house would only cause fruitless excitement, and awaken hopes that would end in disappointment: the result, therefore, was a complete ministerial triumph, and a signal defeat of those who advocated a paper currency and high prices; comprehending not only the ultra tories, but several great landed proprietors noted for opposite political sentiments. Lord Althorp, with the leading members of the whig party generally, as well as Mr. Huskisson and his political disciples, sided with the ministry; and the original motion was abandoned, after an amendment, proposing a select committee, had been thrown out by the enormous majority of 255 to 87.

When this question was set at rest, the real amount of business transacted in parliament was not very important; though the present session was distinguished by a length of debate, on many topics, beyond all precedent: the absurd and mischievous practice, which had lately grown up, especially in the lower house, of suffering the least competent members to make long speeches on every trivial occasion, fruitlessly consumed the time that should have been devoted to action; many important questions were postponed to a period too late for settlement; the accumulation of business outgrew the powers of ministerial industry or capacity; and, what was still worse, the character of the house itself began to be deteriorated by the retirement of many respectable members, who were unwilling to sacrifice their own health, and the comfort of their families, to that insane ardor for speaking which now pervaded the assembly.

Throughout the discussions with which this session commenced, members who opposed government, as well as most of those who supported it, had insisted on the necessity of

reducing taxation, and curtailing the public expenses. Ministers had declared themselves willing to adopt every practicable saving; and any backwardness in that respect was a disposition, in which the whigs could not possibly support them; yet they found themselves under a necessity of resisting various propositions, which were brought forward as measures of proper and salutary retrenchment. The opposition raised against the army, navy, and ordnance estimates was more than usually loud; the number of men proposed for land service being 88,164 (after the intended reduction of 7000); and that for the navy 20,000 seamen, with 9000 marines: Mr. Hume and other members, after animated debates, were defeated, in their proposal for a farther reduction, by large majorities; but the opposition was less unsuccessful in several attacks on the details of expenditure. On the twelfth of February, sir James Graham, who had acquired considerable reputation as a speaker, moved for a reduction of salaries paid to official persons; and the foundation of his motion was, that, subsequently to the Bank restriction act, all had been augmented on the plea of an increase in the expenses of living; therefore, as the restriction had been removed, and we had returned to cash payments, these salaries ought now to be diminished: from this rule he meant indeed to exclude the privy purse and royal establishment, since they stood on arrangements entered into at the beginning of the reign, and ought not to be violated: but the motion was opposed by Mr. Dawson, secretary of the treasury, on the ground, that government had done all that as yet was possible in the way of retrenchment, and still felt a desire to proceed in a spirit of practical economy; he therefore met the question by proposing a resolution himself—for a humble address to his majesty, praying that he would be graciously pleased to lay before the house an account of the progress which had been made in an inquiry into the various departments of the civil government instituted in the year 1821; such being one of those convenient resources that ministers keep in reserve, to dispose of questions which they find it difficult or disagreeable to grant: and by aid of this wind they now steered between the Scylla and Charybdis of aristocratic displeasure and general discontent. On the twelfth of March, sir James, who was rising fast to popularity on independent principles, brought forward a motion to consolidate the treasurership of the navy with some other office, and was supported by 90 votes in a house of 278: this encouraged him, on the twentieth of the same month, to propose an abolition of

the office of lieutenant-general of the ordnance; when he was defeated by a still less majority of 200 to 124. In fact, all attempts to prove the necessity of either office, as a separate and expensive appointment, were opposed to the common sense of the house, as well as of the country; and the resolution thus manifested of clinging to such places for the mere purposes of party influence, disgusted many independent members, and contributed to alienate their confidence from the existing government. But an exposure still more injurious to the system of corruption, accompanied too by a signal defeat of ministers, had been already effected through a motion of sir Robert Heron, on the twenty-sixth of March: this went to strike out a sum from the navy estimates, which had been granted in pensions to the sons of two cabinet ministers—the honorable Messrs. Dundas and Bathurst—as reduced commissioners, after a service of *only four years*. ‘It was well known,’ said sir Robert, who imputed no blame to the young men themselves, ‘that their fathers were noblemen who, for a great number of years, occupied, with little intermission, some of the most important situations in the government: viscount Melville, at the present moment, presided as first lord of the admiralty; and earl Bathurst was lord president of the council, one of the tellers of the exchequer, and joint clerk of the crown: their grandfathers were also men of high consideration; one of them for many years filled the situation of lord high chancellor of England; and the other was a sort of viceroy of Scotland, holding places which produced great emolument, and performing services that were rather equivocal. Now, that these gentlemen, gorged with public money, should require for their families, or even condescend to accept, miserable pensions, and that too in a time of such public distress, did appear to him most paltry: the places given to Mr. Dundas and Mr. Bathurst were offices held during pleasure; and it was therefore in the power of government to dismiss them without pensions: what then must the country think of ministerial professions, when pensions like these were granted, not only without precedent, but without any adequate services performed?’ This scandalous job, which served to advance the cause of parliamentary reform in no small degree, was feebly defended by the chancellor of the exchequer and Mr. Peel: but it did not admit of a single real argument in its justification; and, on a division, the grant was disallowed; for ministers could obtain only 121 votes against 139: their ominous defeat was followed by decreasing majorities during

the remainder of this session ; showing that public confidence was fast deserting those who were so unwilling to redeem their pledges ; and who clung with such callous hearts to corrupt practices, which the public voice had now determined to denounce.

On the ninth of February, committees were appointed by both houses to take into consideration the charter of the East India company ; in proposing which, it was declared, that government was free from all preconceived impressions, and in future proceedings would be guided by the result of this inquiry. A long debate also took place on a motion of Mr. Attwood, proposing to make silver a legal tender, as he maintained it had been before the bank restriction act of 1797, and to restore the circulation of small notes : the question underwent an able and full discussion ; but the notion of a double standard seemed so objectionable, and any scheme for depreciating the currency appeared pregnant with such dangerous consequences, that Mr. Attwood consented to withdraw his motion without dividing the house.

On the fifteenth of March, the chancellor of the exchequer produced his annual exposition of the finances, which presented no remarkable features, except a repeal of the beer and leather duties ; by which ministers desired to show their wish of alleviating the pressure of taxation on the lower classes. This remission of duty on beer, estimated at £3,000,000, was proposed to take place on the tenth of October following ; and the reason given for such delay was, that the repeal should take place conjointly with an opening of the trade, when the time arrived for renewing the licenses of public houses. The measure without doubt proceeded from good motives ; but the unfortunate junction alluded to, by encouraging the increase of public houses to an indefinite extent, has introduced immorality and crime into every corner of the land, where they were before almost unknown ; and has probably occasioned more evil than any act passed during the whole period to which these pages refer.⁷ The demands of the public service, including the charge of our national debt, remained at £47,812,000 ; and the available income being estimated at

⁷ Denounced, as it has been, by the united voices of the clergy, magistrates, and moral men among all classes, as filling our poor-houses and prisons with inmates, it is extraordinary that no christian legislator moves for its repeal—that no one among its promoters seems anxious to relieve his conscience from so heavy a burden.

£50,470,000, a probable balance of about two millions and a half only would be left for the sinking fund. In the revenue of last year, a deficiency of more than half a million below the estimate was acknowledged; but still a clear surplus of four millions had been applied to the redemption of the debt: to compensate for the loss of revenue from the repeal of beer and leather duties, it was proposed to make a small but salutary addition to those on ardent British spirits; and also to effect a yearly saving of £778,000, by the conversion of four per cent. stock into three and a half: these measures were subsequently carried into effect; and two motions by Mr. Hume and Mr. Poulett Thomson, for a general revision of the whole system of taxation, with a view to its reduction, were defeated.

A crude and unintelligible bill for the reform of parliament, brought forward by the marquis of Blandford, the title of which professed, not to prevent, but to regulate abuses, was negatived without a division; also in the case of East Retford, the proposal for transferring its franchise to Birmingham was ultimately rejected, and the privilege extended to the adjoining hundred. During the debate, Mr. Peel expressly disclaimed the imputations which had been thrown out, that this selection had been made with a view to increase the influence of the duke of Newcastle, whom the intervening catholic bill had now thrown into the ranks of opposition; but the circumstance was suspicious; and though due credit was given to the honorable secretary, that the resolution did not proceed on any bargain or understanding with the noble duke; yet there was a large portion of the house and of the country, which could not be brought to believe that a secret partiality for the aristocratic influence in boroughs had not influenced ministers in their determinations: the cause of parliamentary reform therefore advanced another step.

On the third reading of the East Retford bill, a first attempt was made in the British parliament to introduce a principle, new to the representation of this country;—that of taking the votes of electors by ballot, which would protect them from all undue influence, whether of fear or corruption: for this motion, which was made by Mr. O'Connell, only twenty-one voices were raised; but among them were those of lords Althorp, Nugent, and Ebrington: the idea seems to have originated in certain proceedings of the duke of Newcastle regarding the borough of Newark; where his grace was possessed of large property, partly held under a crown lease; and where he had always been able to control and decide the

elections. In a late contest, the usual result took place, and Mr. Sadler, the duke's nominee, was elected in opposition to serjeant Wilde: in consequence, a petition was presented to the house, stating that the successful candidate's return had been obtained through a prevailing belief, founded on experience of former elections, that such of his grace's tenants as should vote against his nominee would be expelled from their occupancies; that many, who gave their votes to the opposing candidate, had, since the election, received notice to quit their holding, whether the same was house or land, and whether it constituted part of the crown estate, or of his grace's private property: it was added, that the duke neither denied that such notices had been given, nor disclaimed them; but justified his conduct on a claim of right 'to do what he would with his own'—a concise and significant sentence, which quickly ran through the land, aiding and accelerating the cause of reform more than the longest speech ever uttered in parliament.

Mr. Poulett Thomson, in moving that the petition should be referred to a select committee, informed the house, not only that the use thus made of crown property affected the constitutional character of our representation, but that its original investment was a base ministerial job, which had caused a great pecuniary loss to the country: the duke of Newcastle's principal influence at Newark arose from about 960 acres of land surrounding the town; and these he held by a lease, granted in 1760, at a rent of only thirty-six pounds! the lease had been renewed in 1815, nine years after its expiration, at a rent of £2060, which fully attested the inadequate payment previously made: but it was still too low; since the estimated value was £3500, or at least £3000. The pecuniary loss, therefore, was worthy of attention; but that was a trifle, compared with the political purposes to which this property had been applied: the noble lessee himself never gave a lease for more than one year, in order to keep the voters completely under his power; and the petition stated the manner in which this power had been employed: if the allegations were true, the house was bound to interfere; for though he did not mean to impugn the just and natural influence of a landlord over his tenant, he asked, whether the power arrogated in this case did not rather resemble the tyranny of a slave-driver than the proper influence of a British landowner? There was not, in the present case, any objection arising from interference with the rights of private pro-

perty : this was a species of property, against the future abuse of which the house might guard, though they could not interfere with the existing lease ; for they could address the crown, praying that it might not be renewed : with a view to have the allegations sifted, he moved that the petition be referred to a select committee. The indignation of Mr. Hobhouse was particularly excited, and his eloquence exerted on this occasion : ‘suppose,’ said he, ‘the king’s government should send to the duke of Newcastle, and let him know, that, when his lease expired, it should no longer be renewed ; suppose that such an intimation was given to his grace, and it was understood or alleged that his ejectment would take place in consequence of a vote given against administration on some great and leading question : if this were done, would it not be denounced as an attack on our dearest privileges ; as an invasion of the most sacred birthright of Englishmen,—the liberty to assert and maintain their opinions ? Compare then the conduct of government in such a case with that of the peer : here were these poor men, because they dared to vote against his candidate, banished from their homes, driven from their happy firesides, and deprived of all the comforts of life. Could such conduct, on the part of the noble duke, bear any comparison with the case of government depriving him of these crown lands, for giving a vote against them ?’

Mr. Sadler rose to declare the petition a mere election paper, made up of wanton allegations and unfounded statements : while he vindicated his patron’s character for humanity and consideration, as regarded the inhabitants of Newark. Mr. Peel, however, defended at large the principle of the whole transaction, as well as the mode by which the land in question had been acquired : he could see no valid distinction between this property, and that which descended to a man as a freehold from his ancestors. ‘The lease,’ he said, ‘which his grace possessed of this crown land, gave him a right to deal with it as with any other portion of his possessions during that period ; and in dealing with the property of the crown as with his own, it was obvious that he committed no breach of privilege : now the petitioners intirely confined themselves to the crown possessions held by the noble duke, praying that a lease of them might in future be refused to him ; they did not even refer to his other property, with regard to which he had dealt precisely in the same manner : it was plain, therefore, that if, in the management of his own private possessions, he had committed no breach of privilege, he had committed none

by dealing in a similar manner with the property of the crown. He would not say that the duke of Newcastle did not dispossess these tenants; but without entering into that question, he would say, that superior to the privileges of that house were other considerations, to which they were bound in duty and conscience to defer—namely, the rights of property: here was no allegation that menaces had been employed; there was only the fact that seven tenants had been dispossessed: now, if they were to control the rights of property, under the idea that those rights had been exercised in controlling an election, a precedent would be set, which might be not merely inconvenient, but positively dangerous; for nothing could be more dangerous than to say, they would not suffer any tenant to be dispossessed, who had voted in opposition to his landlord's wishes: it was in vain that honorable gentlemen exclaimed against the influence which any peer derived from the possession of property; there was no difference between that and the influence which any other great landed proprietor enjoyed; nor could any species of reform exclude such influence: property, he contended should always have an influence in that house, no matter whether it was in the hands of peers or commoners.' The motion for referring the petition to a select committee was negatived by a majority of 194 against 61; but although the legal right in the present instance could scarcely be denied, the judicious exercise of it was another consideration; and as the people of England generally entertained an opinion on this point at variance with that of Mr. Peel and his colleagues, there can be no doubt but this transaction also accelerated the march of reform.

Of all the numerous plans for altering our system of representation, whether suggested by an honest desire to obviate a necessity of sweeping innovations, or springing from the designs of restless demagogues, there were none against which so little could be said as the proposition for conferring the elective franchise on populous manufacturing towns. When proposed to be effected, as in the case of Penryn and East Retford, merely by applying to this purpose privileges which became disposable through the gross delinquencies of corrupt boroughs, it assumed its most innocent form; not adding even to the number of our representatives: though lord John Russell therefore failed in his motion for transferring the elective franchise of East Retford to Birmingham, he did not hesitate to bring the subject again before parliament, by moving for a bill to confer that privilege, independently of all other considera-

tions, on Leeds, Birmingham, and Manchester: and he founded this measure on the known practice of parliament, which extended such rights to unrepresented places, when they had acquired importance by their wealth and population. 'It was true,' he said, 'the proposal hitherto had been, that the franchise should not be conferred till the house had a forfeiture to dispose of; but it was now plain, that if the towns in question were to wait for such a transfer, there was no probability of their ever obtaining it; so numerous were the difficulties started in both houses of parliament: it also seemed not very reasonable, that the fitness of Leeds or Manchester to be represented should be said to depend on the good or bad conduct of the electors of Penryn or East Retford: their claims must rest on circumstances in their own situation; and if that situation was such as to render it just and desirable that they should be represented, where was the sense of saying, that what was just and reasonable ought not to be done, because the electors of some other place had refused to do what was wicked?' His lordship then entered into various details, to show how great had been the increase of the towns in question; declaring 'that he could see no reason why so many citizens and so much wealth should remain unrepresented, when the principle, as well as the practice of our constitution, had pointed out a method of admitting them into parliament. He knew it would be said, that there was no limitation to this principle: he confessed it; and he saw no reason why, if Sheffield, or any other town, should, at some future period, attain to the same rank, it should not obtain the same privilege; but it was not probable that the principle could ever be applied to more than four or five towns in the whole realm: parliament had not always been so fastidious in regard to the possible extension of a principle; witness the disfranchisement of the Irish forty-shilling freeholders: he did not mean even to augment permanently the numbers of the house; for he should propose, that in future cases of disfranchisement, the privileges should not be transferred. The whole measure seemed to him incapable of alarming the most timid person, and ought to be received joyfully by the determined adversaries of dangerous innovation: moreover in looking at the state of other countries, he felt still more strongly the conviction of its good policy: we could not shut our eyes to the fact, that a collision between royal authority and popular resistance was rapidly approaching in France, though all must regret that some compromise was not contemplated to save society from its consequences: it was for us then to profit by

the warning, and awaken in time to a perception of the nice mechanism of our own representative government: it behoved those who, like himself, were lovers of liberty without disorder, and of peace without slavery, to watch anxiously at such a period; endeavoring so to accommodate our system to altered times and circumstances, as to render it worthy of the respect and affection of our people. The constitution itself supplied us with the means; we had only to use its own renovating principles: its fabric was not, as many seemed to imagine, that of a Grecian temple, perfect and complete in all its parts, which could not suffer alteration without the destruction of its symmetry; it was more like a Gothic structure, susceptible of enlargement, consistently with the integrity of its ornaments and the security of its duration.

The moderate views on which this bill was founded were enforced by lord Sandon, Mr. Brougham, Dr. Lushington, and Mr. Huskisson; but although, as the latter gentleman prophetically observed, the time was fast approaching when ministers would be compelled to come down to the house with some measure, or to resign their situations, and nothing was more unwise than for a government to delay important propositions till driven forward by overwhelming majorities,—ministerial apathy and old prejudices prevailed; so that the motion was negatived by 188 votes against 140.

Instead of setting themselves resolutely and soberly to work in reforming abuses, the high conservative party sat mourning over what they called *sacrifices* already made, and trembling at the *consequences* which they anticipated: their condition may be estimated from a few passages in the correspondence of their great leader at this time with his brother lord Stowell. ‘It is impossible,’ says the ex-chancellor, ‘to contemplate what is passing, and to which you refer, without apprehensions of a very serious kind: what is so passing is a renewal, but more frightful, of the prospects of 1791-5. The occurrences of those days, involving the crown and house of parliament, by express mention, in revolutionary projects, and the language—No king—gave them a treasonable character which enabled government to deal with them by law. This is now in their resolutions, declarations, and petitions, carefully avoided; which are more difficult to be dealt with, because more difficult to be met by the existing laws: they are of course more dangerous. The sacrifice too of the test act, and the passing of the Roman catholic emancipation bill, added to the intimidation effected by the unpunished, or rewarded, threats of the

Irish association of O'Connell and Co., have established a precedent so dangerous, so encouraging to the present attempts at revolution under the name of reform, that he must be, in my judgment, a very bold fool who does not tremble at what seems fast approaching. Look, too, at France. What the duke of Wellington will do, I pretend not to guess. What will be said now about the fact, that all the occasional laws against sedition have been suffered to expire? *Heaven save us now! for in man there is no sufficient help.*⁸

Owing to the praiseworthy efforts of Mr. Peel, a bill was passed this session for the limitation of capital punishment in cases of forgery: its principle went to remit that penalty, where the complainants, by due caution, could have protected themselves; and to retain it in other cases, such as forgeries of the great or privy seal, wills, warrants on the public funds, and orders for the payment of money. An amendment, proposed by sir James Mackintosh, confining the infliction of death to the forgery of a will only, was carried in the commons; but the bill was altered again by the lords; and, being brought back to its original principle, ultimately passed both houses. A long discussion took place in the commons, respecting the conduct of the attorney-general, in filing *ex officio* informations against the proprietor of a London newspaper; when the general impression on the house seemed to be, that the prosecutions complained of were harsh and vindictive; and that sir James Scarlett, notwithstanding his whig education, and a political life spent in opposition, was inclined to be a very harsh attorney-general, and was preparing to secede from his former friends and principles: he made one expiring, but futile attempt, to obtain popularity, by a bill to alter the laws of libel, as they existed in what were called the six acts; one of which provided, that a second conviction for any seditious or blasphemous libel might be punished with transportation; and another demanded, that every person who published a newspaper should enter into a recognisance of £300 in London, and £200 in the country, with two sufficient securities, in order to guard against the circulation of such libels; and to ensure a fund, available toward the payment of any penalty awarded against their authors: by the bill now introduced, the punishment of transportation was to be repealed, but the securities raised to £400 in London, and £300 in the country. It was objected, that the repeal proposed was no boon; since it was known from the first that the power granted by the act would

⁸ Life, by Horace Twiss, vol. iii. p. 106.

never be exercised ; while the latter proposition was calculated to impose additional shackles on the press : when the bill therefore was in committee, a majority rejected this clause, on the motion of lord Morpeth ; but, on the third reading, sir James, having brought down, or opportunely found, a more numerous attendance of ministerial members, moved and carried its restoration.

Committees of the house of commons, and the law commissioners, having found much to blame in arrangements for the distribution of justice in Wales, an act passed this session, abolishing the separate system of Welsh judicature, and annexing it to that of England. By the same bill, the number of puisne judges was increased from twelve to fifteen ; a new one being added to each of the courts of king's bench, common pleas, and exchequer : but in Scotland, a different system was pursued ; for while the high court of admiralty and commissary court were abolished, the remaining court of session was diminished, by the subtraction of two from its fifteen lords ordinary, or working judges ; on whose ability to get through their work it depends, whether the eight other judges, who sit, four and four, in two courts of review, shall have judgments brought before them.

These, and some other objects of importance, among which may be reckoned lord Lyndhurst's bill for improving our courts of equity, which was again opposed by lord Eldon, engaged the attention of parliament, until it was interrupted by the sovereign's decease. His majesty's health had been for a considerable time in a precarious state ; but the first bulletin was not issued till the fifteenth of April, when it was announced that he was laboring under a bilious attack, accompanied by an embarrassment in his breathing. The disorder was afterwards ascertained to have been an ossification of the valves of the heart, the symptoms continuing to vary ; so that the patient enjoyed temporary intervals of comparative ease, though such an accession of bodily debility ensued as rendered the slightest exertion painful : in consequence, a message was sent down, on the twenty-fourth of May, to both houses, stating that his majesty found it inconvenient to sign public documents with his own hand, and requesting parliament to provide means for the temporary discharge of that function of the crown, without detriment to the public service : a bill was accordingly passed, allowing the sign manual to be executed with a stamp ; such instrument to be used in the presence of the king, by some person

authorised by his majesty's word of mouth; the same person being also required to sign a declaration to that effect, in presence of certain high officers of state; nor was any document to be stamped, before its indorsement by three privy councillors had taken place. This arrangement, so important to the public business, caused much discussion, and was the first true indication of the king's real condition to the people; from whom he had of late so intirely secluded himself, that even his death excited less sensation than usually follows the departure of a monarch. About the end of May, a favorable turn of the disorder gave rise to hope, and his majesty attended to public business; but this feeling soon passed away; for his chest became affected, blood was mingled with the expectoration, and general debility rapidly ensued.

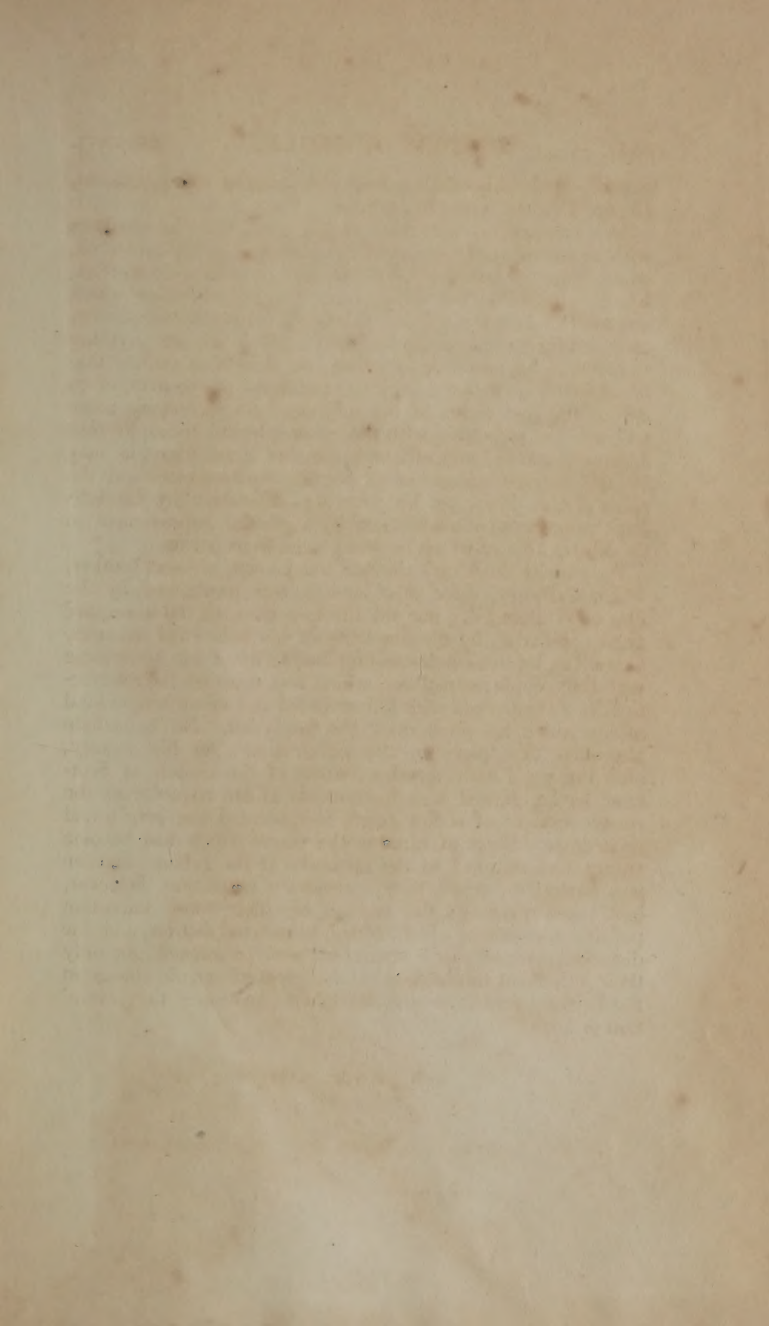
Some short time before the final catastrophe, his majesty's physicians delicately but candidly intimated to him, that all farther endeavors to avert the stroke of death would be unavailing; when he calmly answered, 'God's will be done!' and subsequently received the holy sacrament from the hands of the bishop of Chichester: soon after, his voice became faint and low; for several days his words were scarcely articulated; his sleep was broken and disturbed; and he was constantly in need of assistance. Thus lay George IV. in the magnificent palace of the kings of England, surrounded by luxuries and splendor unknown to the greatest of his predecessors, when the angel of death approached, on the night of Friday, the twenty-fifth of June: he had slept little during the evening, and from eleven to three was in a restless slumber, opening his eyes occasionally when he suffered more than usual pain from a cough, which appeared to be occasioned by the impeded flow of blood through the left side of the heart; in consequence of which it was thrown back on the lungs so as to produce congestion: nothing, however, occurred till three o'clock which indicated any particular change, when the king beckoned to the page in waiting to alter his position: he was immediately obeyed; the couch, constructed for the purpose, was gently raised, and the sufferer lifted to his chair: but at that moment a blood-vessel burst: the effect was apparent to his attendants, who hastened to apply the usual stimulants, and to call in the physicians; when the royal patient himself perceived that his dissolution was at hand, and exclaimed,—'O God, I am dying!' A few seconds afterwards, in a whisper scarcely audible, he added—'This is

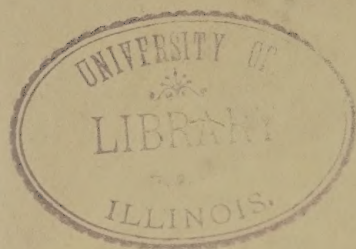
death!—and when the medical men entered the apartment, George IV. had ceased to breathe.

In estimating the character of this monarch, who was born with an amiable disposition, whose mind was highly cultivated, whose charity was great, and whose manners were perfect, let us not, while we acknowledge the imperfections which obscured those fine qualities, forget the powerful temptations to which he was peculiarly exposed; and if we see anything to blame in his conduct as a prince, let us at least confess that he betrayed no desire unduly to extend the prerogative, or to curtail the just rights of his subjects. As regent, his name will ever be associated with the most splendid triumphs that adorn our annals; and although some of those triumphs may be said to have arisen out of peculiar circumstances and the spirit of the times, yet his reign was illustrated by the brilliant progress of intellect, and by a general improvement in the liberal arts, of which he was a munificent patron.

As soon as the king's decease was known, his next brother, William Henry, duke of Clarence, was proclaimed by the title of William IV.; nor did the new monarch fail to acquire great popularity, by the simplicity of his habits and manners, as well as by the condescending familiarity of his intercourse with the people;—qualities, which lost none of their attraction by a comparison with the secluded and misanthropic kind of life which his predecessor had lately led. No immediate alteration took place in the government; for his majesty, after the usual oaths for the security of the church of Scotland, having signed such instruments as are requisite at the commencement of a new reign, re-appointed the judges and other great officers of state to the places which had become vacant, and signified to the members of the cabinet that he was anxious to retain their services: a revolution, however, had taken place in the feelings of their most important political supporters, which, added to national distress, and the disturbed state of public sentiment, soon occasioned, not only their retirement from office, but the greatest organic change in the British constitution that has taken place since the revolution of 1688.

END OF VOL. XVII.







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History of England from the Invasion of



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